



Pike and Carronade

BY

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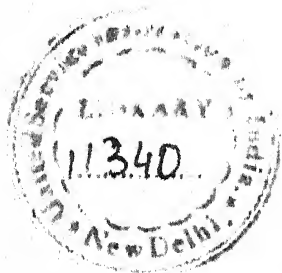
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*WITH FRONTISPIECE BY
LIEUT.-COLONEL A. C. LOVETT*

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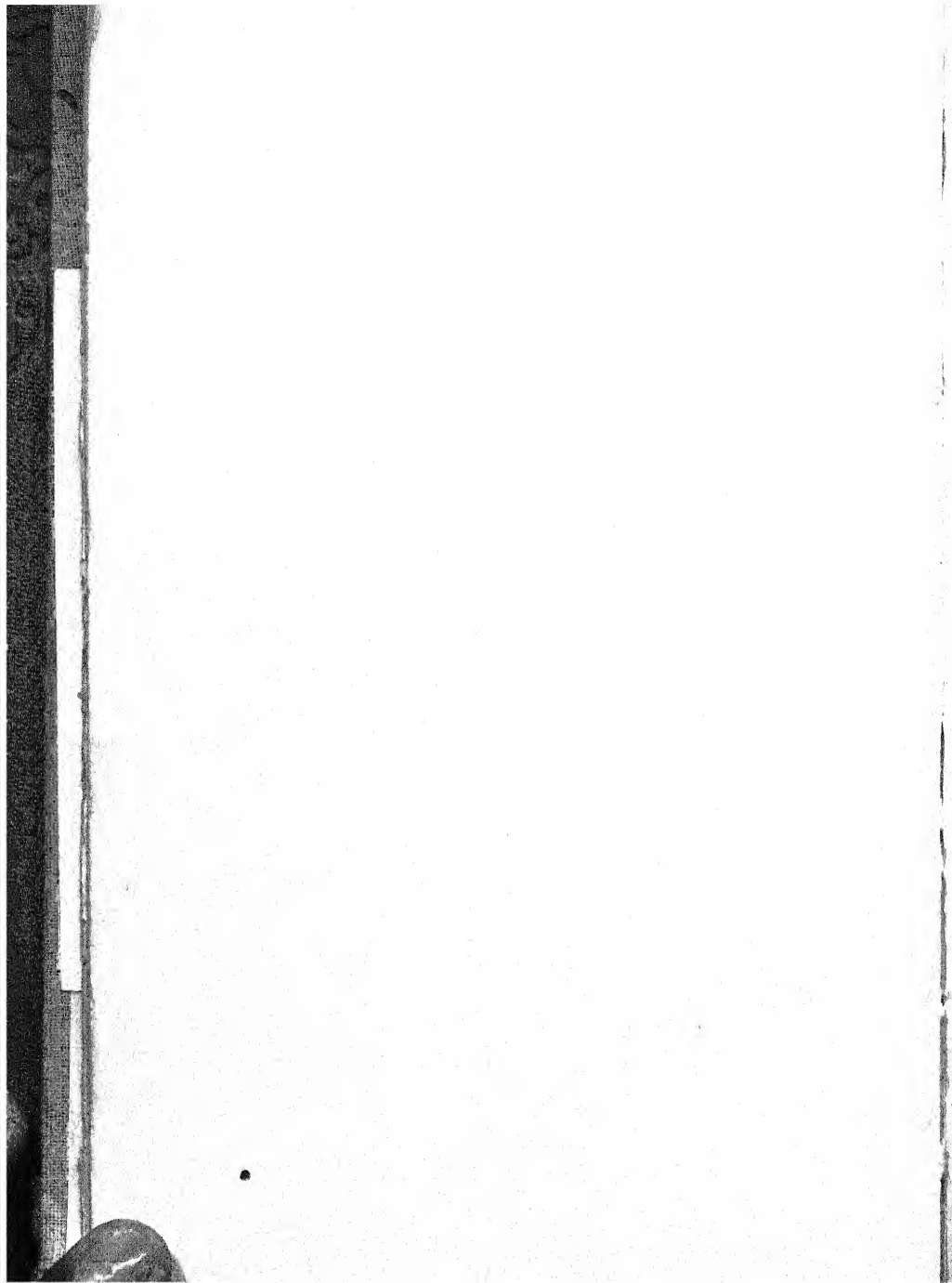
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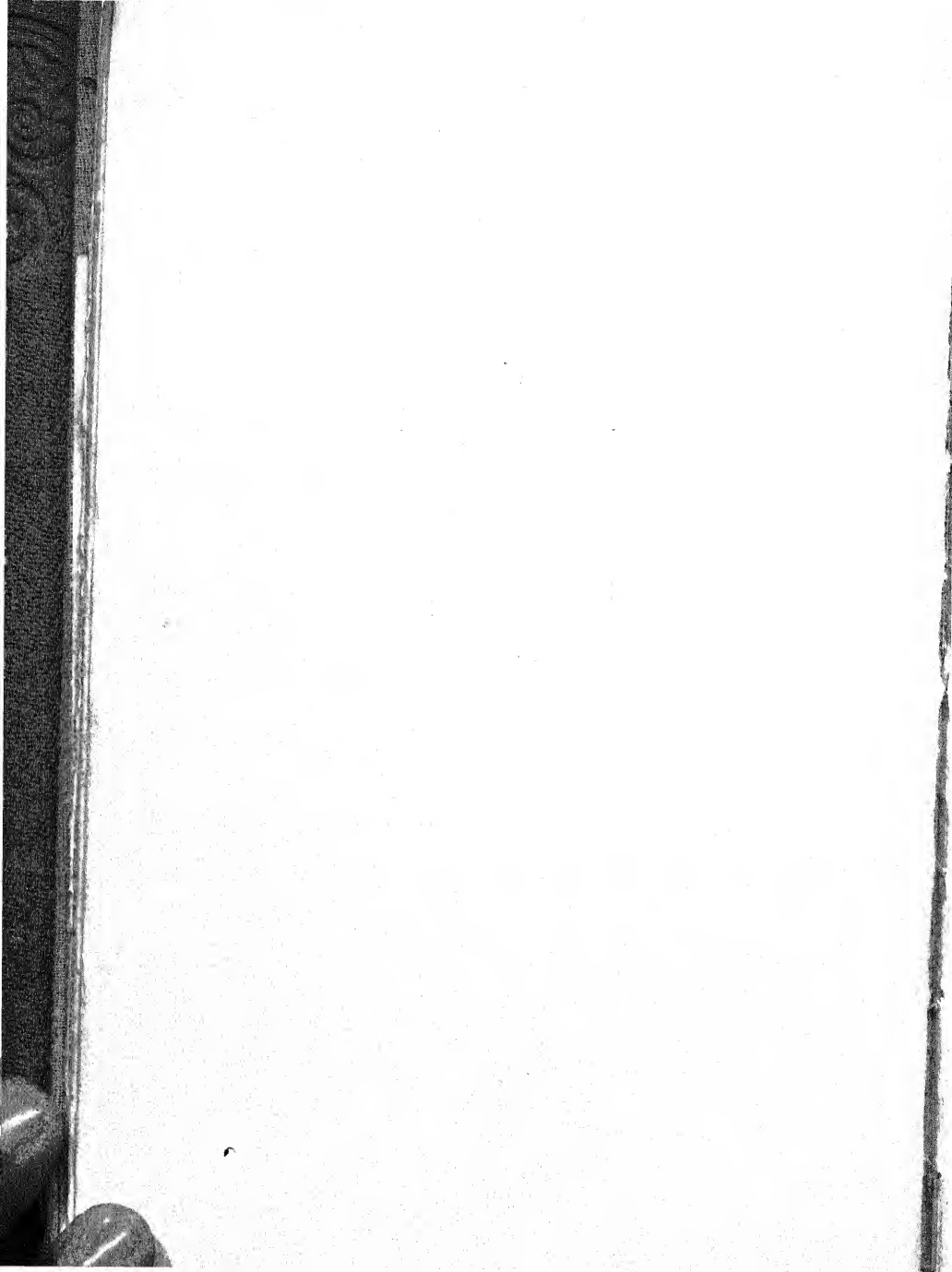
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Pike and Carronade.

THREE GAMBITS.

I.

"They shot at the strong and slashed at the weak,
From the Chindwin scrub to the Salween teak."

—*The Ballad of Boh Da Thone.*

ON the banks of the great Irrawaddi, far above even the Third Defile, a small mobile column sits lazy, waiting the arrival of the tiny river-steamer, chunking against stream, with the artillery of the force aboard. Away in the east lie blue hills and snowy peaks, beneath which Britain marches with China, and highland cateran harries the trade between the mighty empires.

Fifty mounted infantry, true Thomas on Burman or *mashebo* ponies, as he delights to call them, 200 Panjabi foot-soldiers, 100 stuggy Gurkhas of a Military Police battalion, with a party of Burman sappers, and the guns now coming alongside

the bank, form the force at the disposal of the local warden. At their hands Singpho caterans are to learn that though British patience be spun out as a summer's day, yet the Sirkar's arm is as long as a winter's night.

Chunk, chunk go the paddles of the steamboat rounding a tricky snag, while "*Saré do baam*" comes the monotonous chant of the man in the chains, changing to a minor "*Ek baam ek hath*" as the little trooper sidles into the bank, a Gardner gun screwed on her forward deck, two squat mountain-guns—passengers these—behind, and gun-mules and gunners in every possible corner. The ready gunners soon sling off their vixen weapons, very pug-dogs of war, and mules scramble ashore from upstairs, downstairs, and out the skipper's chamber; while the almond-eyed Shan girls of the river village giggle and ogle, titter and spit at the merry show the *thakins* (sahibs) are affording them.

With the arrival of the guns the column is complete, and the force falls in by the police stockade—guns and sappers near the head, strings of hardy Chinese mules and laughing Panthay drivers, the baggage of the force, in rear. Then a cheer from the Sikhs and shouts from the muleteers as the column files away through the pagodas and prayer-wheels down the village street and out into the paddy and

jungle — the villagers chuckling to think that vengeance is in store for those who but last week crucified a lad and burnt an old lady of the village.

The afternoon's march is peaceful, ending in thick bamboo jungle at the foot of the hills, and the force sleeps on the bank of a rippling *chaung*, laagered as best it may in the thick undergrowth. Grey dawn behind the teak-trees, the enemy reported blocking the road barely five miles away: all is excitement and content. The column must march in single file, and even the leading men cannot see for more than a hundred yards ahead. Flanking is out of the question: luck and pluck are the only flankers possible in Burman jungles. As business is expected, the Gurkha, half-ferret, half-lynx, must head the column, an officer with the leading point, not because he can do much good there, being no ferret, but because of the law that says a white man must be first when there's any ball-firing. To a steady three mile an hour the column now winds and climbs, silent save for the cries of the muleteers, the jingle of the bell-mules, and the jinketty-jink of the gun-train. At any moment an unseen foe may open with Remington and Snider, musket and matchlock, from any quarter of the dense jungle shroud that envelops them.

•

A check: *panjies*, *Anglicè* calthrops, are said to hamper the way. The enemy are evidently about, a warning shot sounds away up the hill-side, nerves are on strain, and the wait while Johnnie Gurkha clears the road is tedious; so all are relieved when, 500 yards farther, a volley from rifles and a splutter from slug-charged muskets show that the great game has begun. Concealment is now no longer part of the enemy's programme, and a fiendish combination of yells, tom-toms, and gongs rises from behind a high stockade, which, craftily concealed in the jungle, absolutely bars all further progress and is cunningly arranged to sweep with fire a space where the road in front widens. The highlanders evidently mean business: one of the Gurkhas lies drumming out his last breath on the open, calling on Rama; another limps away well sown with slugs. The rest of the advance-guard are nowhere to be seen, lying alert and adjacent, hidden like hares behind the smallest of bushes. Not so some twenty of the leading Sikhs, who, far too solid to think of taking cover, and burning to show their manhood, led by an impetuous jemadar shouting "*Khalsa ki futteh!*" (Victory to the Khalsa!) think only of carrying the barrier by assault. Once more rattle the Remingtons and splutter the matchlocks—two leading Singhs fall never to rise again, one more impetuous

than his comrades lies impaled on spikes at the bottom of a hidden pit, and two more limp to the jungle with feet pierced by *panjies* through the sole of their boots, the spikes coming out through their insteps. The remainder, breathless and uncertain, have flung themselves in a small ravine seventy yards from the stockade, whence triumphant Kachins yell scurrilous abuse in Shan and Burman. By this time the column commander has arrived on the scene, and, none too pleased to see dead men in the grass, realises that a turning movement is the only course. Away go fifty Gurkhas on the right flank, clearing a path with their kukris. Thirty of the British mounted infantry and as many Sikhs work off round the left, while one of the pugs of war is unlimbered and put together, dragged into the ravine, loaded, and kept ready to run out when the moment arrives. Half an hour is allowed the turning parties to get into position, ready to rush in when the first gun booms out. Time's up! Time to stop the yells and gong-players rejoicing in their apparent victory. Run out the 7-pounder point-blank at 70 yards, while rifle and musket splutter! The first shell crashes through the stockade and explodes, the gongs are dropped, musketry ceases, nothing can be heard save the crackle of jungle, followed by the crisp volleys of the turning parties pursuing

the flying caterans, erst so exultant. Sappers now hurry in safety to the stockade, and with axe and mattock clear the path and pull up the calthrops, while the mournful dooly swings to the front with its patient bearers.

Inside the stockade lies a Kachin minus a leg, blown off at the thigh by the direct hit of a 7-lb. shell, which burst in his groin; another lies with a bullet in his brain; a third, wounded, wonders whether immediate despatch or slow torture awaits him. Gongs, matchlocks, priceless Remingtons, Shan straw hats, and even *dahs*,¹ lie where their frightened owners dropped them, in their terror at that shell's incontinent entry. The commander and guns enter the breach, and the small force begins to reassemble, satisfied at its success, chagrined to find that its casualties apparently treble the foe's, unless the flanking parties have had luck, while now and again the rearguard sullenly firing reminds them that this is but the first step on a steep and arduous journey through many a hornet's nest.

The caterans and their allies, rebel *Tsawba* and refugee *Boh*,² have yet to be pursued and rushed for many a weary week ere the *Pax Britannica* be fairly established, and the caravans of jade and rubber, cotton and salt, may safely ply from

¹ *Dah* = a Burmese sword.

² *Tsawba* and *Boh*, Kachin and Burmese words = chief.

Yunan and the Mekong valley to the fruitful Burman flats. But the white Gambit has been no failure.

II.

“When the big guns speak to the Khyber Peak,
And the dog Heratis fly,
The redcoats crawl to the sangar wall,
And the Usbeg lances fail.”

Grey dawn in old Kohat; once more have highland caterans pulled at the lion's tail, and the lion, backed by the tiger, is setting forth to war.

A different manner of caterans these from former acquaintances on the China marches, who, after years of vaunting their inviolate *purdah*,¹ have at last provoked their over-patient suzerain. All yesterday and for the last two nights, over the pass from Peshawar, up the cart-road from the Indus rail-head, have poured the pick of the Indian army,—sapper and pioneer, Gurkha and Highlander, Sikh and Irishman, the flower of the two coast armies, guns and more guns, long strings of kicking mules, gurgling camels, and creaking bullock-carts, faster and faster, vassal and master, haste to the muster below the Sikh bastions in old Kohat.

¹ *Purdah*=veil.

Grey dawn on the Kurram road, crimson east over Fort Mackeson, as the army heads out from its rendezvous. Wild thrills the heart at a Panjabi regiment, leading off in the dust, with throbbing *dole* and weird *surnai* (the Afghan drum and pipe), to the old lawless Kabul love-song of "*Zakhmi dil*."¹ Farther back in the mingled dawn and dust the pipes of a Scottish battalion skirl "Haste to the gathering." No lack of the romance of war here! Hark to the squealing fifes from under yonder hill, moving off a line battalion 1000 rifles strong; hark to the thud of 2000 feet marking time, to drop into their place on the road.

Then in still denser dust swing by the mountain-guns, not by sections this time, or even by batteries, but whole brigades, businesslike and silent save for jingling chains, rolling lance-high the acrid dust, till barely the pennons of their lancer escort are visible. Hard on the guns follow more battalions, each to its own pet tune, as battalions should—while mile upon mile behind follow stretcher and dooly, mules, camels, and all the pack-train of a frontier army setting out to war, even as of old, Kean and Elphinstone, Sale and Pollock, "Charlie Napier," beloved of his soldiers, Roberts and Stewart, have swung out across the Indus.

¹ "The Bleeding Heart."

Through thirty miles of a flank-march, past the little oasis of Hangu, partly secured by the grim limestone forts on the Samana knife-edge, which but a month back fought for their lives against Afridi hordes and Orakzai mullahs, the huge army continued its march, dropping, as it went, small garrisons to guard its rearward road.

The third day the throbbing *dole* ushers the leading battalions to position for the first blow, beneath towering heights and under the walls of a police post whose shell-pierced towers show the struggle for mastery recently enacted. Here a small advanced force is already installed, burial parties at work, soothing its fingers, burnt in the hasty reconnaissance of yesterday. By noon sufficient force has arrived to commence operations, and inaugurate the leader's plan of cutting through three mighty ranges into the headwaters of three winding valleys, and the heart of tribal security,—in general idea far superior to threading the said valleys from their Indusward mouths.

The general-in-chief in the forts above has been busy with the intelligence. Helios flicker all day, and lamps flap till late into the night preparing the force for the morrow's opening blow, while away on the northern summits tribal banners come and go the day long, till spirits

run high at the coming contest. That day, too, driving post, arrives, hastily recalled from retirement, the dark spare soldier, half Douranie, whose presence a month ago could have kept young blood cool and old heads steady, now too late save to mitigate punishment for the tribes he had controlled so well.

The night, too short for wearied troops, ends at two with the shrill *réveille*, hurried coffee, and agonised straining of loading-ropes. Away long before dawn, Gurkhas leading, Kempster's brigade in front, Dicky Westmacott's to follow, guns well to the fore, Yeatman Bigg's division climbs the winding path up the steep spur, past loopholed embattled homesteads, to the top of the Chagru Kotul. By 8 A.M. the top of the pass is gained, and the precipitous gorge, fringed with towers on each commanding crag, comes into view, the whole commanded by the dark Dargai cliffs, within fair rifle-range, along which the tribal banners wave.

Away 3000 feet below lies the camp just left, and one endless trail of pack-animals, carrying baggage and ten days' food for the force, waits patiently till the road be open. One point is quite evident. Impossible to enter the sombre defile till the Dargai Heights be clear! Kempster's brigade to assault, "Westie" to support; slam the mountain-guns into action, three bat-

teries on the Kotal—one 1000 feet above on the Samana Sukh, under General Lockhart's immediate eye—and the ball opens. Crash along the sangars on the cliffs beat the shrapnel. Northwards hurry Travers's Gurkhas along the knife-ridge that leads to the foot of the Dargai cliffs, with Narik Sukh towering above. The Dorsets hurry after in close support, the Derbys more leisurely; all apparently goes well, till out from final cover along the 100 yards of narrow isthmus dart Travers and his leading files, who gain the foot of the heights in safety. Then out bursts such a rifle-fire that none can follow him over the isthmus; section after section tries to rush across, only to be swept down. Gurkha, Dorset, and Derby each fail in daring efforts, till the narrow arena is piled with dead and dying.

For hours the day hangs—the whole army is checked. During two more hours shrapnel sweeps the sangar crests—still no successful effort is possible. A kingdom for him who'll take the heights! Then the hour and the man—Highlanders and Sikhs in close order move up to where the *débris* of two battalions awaits fresh impetus. The colonel of the Gordons has recognised that in a rush *en masse* all cannot be hit. Officers and pipers to the front! The pipe-major's swagger is inimitable—loud skirl the

pipes, and, whirled up in the disciplined *elan* of the Gordons and the 3rd Sikhs, Gurkhas, Dorsets, Derbys in one wild rush sweep over that corpse-encumbered isthmus, and swarm up the cliffs, only to find that after the first storm of bullets their enemies had fled. The effect of that rush had scared the tribes from further clinging to a position that was absolutely impregnable.

Thus was the Dargai ridge occupied, mule-trains freed to pass the Kotal, and again the prestige of British bayonets borne high on the short-memoried frontier, though close on 300 dead and wounded men lay on that tiny isthmus scarce bigger than a cricket-pitch, to show the tiger's cubs that the lion's whelps come ever from the old stock, and that both dare die together.

Ere nightfall that night the heights were intrenched and occupied, the troops bivouacked on the pass, and the weary transport dragged up the spurs, while the long strings of doolies jostling their way down the goat-track to Shinawri told of the price of war.

Next day the force rolled on its way, not merely to lift the *purdah* of the vainest of tribes on the frontier, but to rend it with no light hand—and such was the second Gambit.

III.

"Strike hard who may, shoot straight who can,
The odds are on the cheaper man."

—*Frontier Arithmetic.*

Once more the opening day of war, under scenes far different, yet full of resemblances to earlier ones. No mountains, wide rivers, or pathless jungles this time, but open rolling prairie, with low flat hills, which, appearing hull-down on the horizon, give the quaint impression of being on a roof-top 'mid neighbouring gable-ends. A broken rail, twisted telegraphs, a bullet-blistered station-house, are the only signs that a destructive enemy has passed.

A few ironstone kopjies sharply silhouetted in the twilight, and the whirling dust as troops detrain from the temporary rail-head, call to mind vividly enough the glamour of three years back, when an army crowded over the Indus, while the smell from a newly burnt patch of veldt brings mingled memories and regrets of Upper Burma.

Hard by, at the temporary loading-ramps, the properties differ, save for the familiar khaki, from those of other days. No grobbling camels and kicking pack-animals, no stalwart Sikhs and chaffing Gurkhas, but train after train of cheery beefy Atkinses, not yet blended with Hotspur

the Yeoman, or Tim Flinagan of the "Milishy." Rumbling unwieldy ox-wain, giant oxen, quaintly spanned mule-trollies, take the place of camel and pack-pony. Red-crossed vans replace the cumbrous dooley, while every modern implement of war that flat plains instead of trackless mountains afford scope for, is ready to hand.

Here and there loll felt-hatted colonials, fore-runners of many a lawless hard-bitten corps, their wide-brimmed hats trimmed with wild-cat fur, and cocked *à la Kerenheuler*, surmounted with the device of "Somebody's Scouts." These last survey with some amazement the disciplined Atkins, slow to think and heavy to move, while they in their turn receive scant approval from men who have yet to learn their own impotence against the guerilla.

As train on train arrives, the bivouacs by the station spread, and by dark the portion of the force to trek out on the morrow is assembled and complete.

Morning comes with its inevitable *réveillé* in the dark, when vitality is lowest and the outlook cheerless, counterbalanced by the glorious air of the veldt, and in this case the keen sense of excitement, which must animate new troops starting against an ungauged foe.

Orders have been secret, but rumour now runs through the force that eight miles away, holding a long range of low hills, a Boer commando

covers a drift that the force must seize and hold. As yet hardly an officer or man has been engaged—a few had a brush in a recent patrol, but like wise men have kept their impressions to themselves—so all is pleased expectancy. The force is under weigh,—200 mounted infantry, Somebody's scouts, half a cavalry regiment, with a field battery, form the mounted force, moving with an old-time screen of vedettes in front; behind swing two battalions of infantry, followed by ambulances and waggons. Two hours have passed, six miles covered, never a sign of an enemy. "D—d slow!" murmured some second lieutenant, when, r-r-r-rp from a clumpjie of bushes to the left front, and back scuttle the vedettes, two riderless horses among them. The force halts automatically. "Gallop round to the right of the bush," suggests Captain Somebody the scout, to the commander: "it's only a picket,"—and away go the cavalry nothing loth, in time to see half a dozen men scamper away over the shimmering grass. The distant ridge is now in sight, scarce 4000 yards away. The screen push on, Captain Somebody gallops off with his scouts, to return with the report that Boers are holding the neck and flanking rises for over five miles.

"This sounds like business," says the commander, who tempers his desire for a frontal attack with the insistent advice of his scout-leader to move the mounted men to a flank, the

result being the deployment of 500 infantry for the normal attack, and the sharp trot away of the mounted troops on a flanking detour. While the infantry extend, the guns, eager for work and for a short range, gallop in past the extended files to 2000 yards, the trails rap on the ground together, the limbers trot away to the rear, and ere a minute is over the first iron messenger of authority flouted has started on its errand. This is too much for the sturdy farmer, who sees that he needn't fear the mounted turning party yet awhile, and tie-toe, tie-toe tick the mausers, with an accurate persistency most disconcerting to folk new to modern rifles and South African atmosphere. Rattle! among brakes, ping! among the wheels, crack! against the trails. Things are humming among the guns, while the advancing infantry lines have hardly yet attracted attention. As yet no casualties in the battery, fire discipline is perfect; whang ring the shrapnel pairs, win-n-ng says the answering mauser bullet, horses are dropping away behind in the teams, the captain who has brought up a message rides back swearing immoderately with a bullet in his arm; a gun-layer lies gasping on his back; instinctively the gunners when not at work crouch round the trail, though up at once to the slightest order. The major thinks of his last fight at Ahmed Kheyl and the ghazis among

the waggons, sees the steadily advancing infantry, and settles down to directing his now accurately fused shrapnel.

The ever-creeping infantry advance now comes in for its share. The supports, untrained to extend like the skirmishing line, are catching it hot, and hastily open out. The leading line has several gaps, but discipline has kept it advancing without yielding to the temptation to lie down and fire back. Then of a sudden firing dies away and ceases. The turning movement has been too much for what is only a small advanced commando, and distant volleys on the left show that the Burgher is scampering away. The neck and ridge are now ours, and possibly the drift may follow as easily.

The loss is not heavy,—four or five killed and a dozen or so wounded; but what have the enemy lost? One badly wounded man is found, and two dead horses, also a broken rifle. Not much for so much noise; perhaps they have carried them away—perhaps, but hardly possible. At any rate, the first move has proved a success and the old spirit still to the fore; but the thoughtful are busy with searching questions.

If this is what happens when the enemy don't mean business, what will it be like when they do? They might well ask: now they know. Here endeth the third Gambit.

EN AVANT LES ENFANTS PERDUS!

"Quand un gendarme rit dans la gendarmerie,
Tous les gendarmes rient dans la gendarmerie."

THIS is a story of the good old happy days in the Shiny East, when Abereigh MacKay wrote of his friends the Cee-Ai-Ees, and planters plotted to deport Viceroy's whose politics suited them not; when leave *was* leave, and hill captains were hill captains, and delightful grass widows went to the hills to meet those same delightful captains, and banjoes and *bonhomie* led to preferment, and General Staffs had not set their hoof on the land; when poor old general-duty-wallah colonels brought up families of larky daughters in roomy hill forts, and Lachman Hulwai sold sweets and purveyed news to passers-by in the Khyber Pass, and troubled not his head concerning his putative grandfather, the Irish peer.

* In those good days there was once a general so famous that people wrote verses about him and grass widows and heliographs tempestuously at play. In addition to which he was a very notable

soldier and a fighting man too, which is rather different, and had been among the first into the Sekunder Bagh as a young man, and at the head of his brigade on the Peiwar as an old one. An outspoken man too, who, as a Staff officer, told his general what he thought, and that "Admiral Byng had been shot for less," and the like. He also possessed a power of picturesque blasphemy which endeared him to the rank and file and the young officer. It is to be conceived, therefore, that he might furnish suitable material for a *conte drolatique*.

But every story must have its setting, and this one must be set in the outer hills of the great Himalaya, the home of the eternal snows, to the fringe of which the British hitch their summer stations. The Himalaya is apt to get into a man's blood, so that he will tramp them to the end of his days, and lay his bones by rock and pine and mountain ash. To the hills, as is well known, the great *sirkar* and all the lesser *sirkars* betake themselves for many reasons, but primarily because you cannot rule an empire from the kitchen, and men's minds work clearer in 70° Fahrenheit than 120°. But however pleasant may be Ephesus or Capua to the real traveller, there is no variety like the come and go of the Himalayan road from the grand trunk in the plains to the foot of the eternal snow.

Many and various are the ways to the hills, wide trunk roads to the foot, and a winding carriage road to the top, or nothing but a bridle-path and sedan-chair gradient; and sometimes in this twentieth century a circling narrow-gauge rock-railway, which latter is a wilful throwing away of the delights of the road.

In the early summer are to be seen young regiments, mountain batteries, ladies, children, nurses, struggling out of the sweltering trains, chaffering for conveyances, struggling with bullock trains, in the rush from stifling heat for the right to breathe. With the *sahib logue* go the entourage of the English—traders, merchant pedlars, tailors, tramps, and beggars—and, heedless of them all, the pilgrim making for some shrine away under the snows. Out of the clatter and heat of the station you drive through miles of ripening corn, amid clouds of white dust to the thin haze that gradually shapes into mountains as the tonga ponies eat the road. A long line of hooded bullock-carts contains the wives and children of a regiment moving to the hills. A few miles on the regiment itself is nearing its camp, with the sound of drums and fifes or pipes lilting high above the acrid dust. You pass a small travellers' rest-house, with a solitary grave by its side to tell how someone dropped by the way; and the cemetery by the military

camping-ground tells of a cholera outbreak, the chastisement of the "grim stepmother of our kind." But happily cholera no longer haunts the British soldier and drives him to tramp the country-side in the midst of summer to get away from the pestilence. But if it is not one terror it is another, and the cry is: To the hills! So, past rest-house and cemetery and ripening crops, past river-bed and oleanders, past scrub and cheer pine, to blue pine and deodar, tramps the regiment, jolts the bullock train, and rattles the tonga; and the air gets fresher and the light cool breezes play, and the tired soldiers' babies revive.

The agent at the turnpike bar, the aged Moham-medan servant who has set up in life as a purveyor of poor tea, the beggar who rattles his gourd under the loquat trees in the old Mogul garden, the blind boy with the zither, who plays "Tommy, make room for your uncle" or "Cocky North," or whatever he fancies is the latest thing, are all old friends that you meet on the way to the hills. As the first sail top on the Sussex coast, or the first Martello tower and curling sea horse, or the man cut in the chalk downs, are signs on the way of the return to the sea, so are the landmarks on a road to the hills.

So, as your tonga changes pony for the last

time at the brewery to a smell of hops, and you enter the rhododendron forest that means the last lap, and you pass the convent and the orphanage, and oaks and chestnuts prove that the East is left miles below, you feel that you have once again earned the right to drink good Bass for dinner and to sleep in the cool till tea time.

So much for the wanderer's journey to the hills in the summer; now for the hills and the story of the famous general, and how the story became a story at all. It does not much matter which of the hill stations the story is about: all of them, while distinctive enough in their way, have much in common. There are little cottages and villas scattered about among the forest, up hill and down hill; there are Government offices; there are military offices; there are shops of all kinds, from the attractive widow of a London street to the native shop with lattice-alcoved verandah that has stepped out of Delhi. On the best spur the convent; on as good a one the club; down a side path the Masonic temple veiled in allegory and symbol, with no man knows what high jinks inside. Close to them all, perhaps, is the old cemetery, containing little glimpses of the history of the British in India on its decaying stones, and down on a lower spur the new one. Mrs

Lollipop in a dandy or rickshaw hurrying off to pay calls, or discuss an ice with her best hill captain—a pillar of the State—and his daughter riding down the circular way, sing ho, sing hey, for Arcady. And then away over the valleys to the East, the eternal snow, that is close on a hundred miles away, and yet looks as if you could throw a stone on to it, each peak higher and more dazzling than the other, and the great trade road to Tibet winding its way towards them, with the pilgrim searching peace and ever looking forward—*θάρσει, ἔγχειται, φωνεῖ σε.*

But besides the ordinary officer on leave, or official at his task, and those that sojourn with them, is an important class that is a portion of that domiciled community whose existence so inextricably binds us to India. That domiciled community, which ranges from the pure-bred country-born Englishman that has only lacked English air and English beef in his development, to the man with the minutest share of white blood in his veins, whose future and fate is so peculiarly ours to care for. In all the Himalaya are colonies of the domiciled community. Retired warrant officers, with commissioned rank at the end of their service; retired clerks from Government offices, owning houses, dairies, and fruit farms; children of earlier settlers carrying on their fathers' business; imported tradespeople from

England,—all combine to swell the non-official population. The older businesses, it is interesting to note, were often founded by soldiers and non-commissioned officers of the old Bengal Artillery, whose initiative has followed them from the field to the desk. Old officers placed on the Company's invalid establishment for ill health when young were to be met here and there till a few years ago—indeed, may still answer to their name in this world, perhaps. Then, too, may be found some children of those sent in days gone by to carve a new name in the East,—children, perhaps, of one who “lost her place in heaven for the glamour of a sword,” with the bar-sinister across their name for ever. Some, too, whose mothers “minded goats upon a hill, sing hey, sing ho, a grassy hill,” for there are attractive women born in the shepherds’ huts in the Himalayan glacis, and there is as much romance in the inner history of the community of a hill station as any lover of fiction could ask to read of.

It was to a station such as this, therefore, that the general of our story wended his way one early summer many a year ago to command his division in peace and the cool. Now among the many results of 1857 has been the fashioning of volunteer corps from the civilian and domiciled community, so that the hand may keep the head

next time it pleases the cauldron to boil. With a miscellaneous white and Christian community such as has been described it was but natural that the hill station in question, which was a large one, should have a volunteer corps. A volunteer corps, too, of a creditable size, with two cadet companies attached, not to mention a machine gun. During the summer the corps would put in its more extended training, and it was the general's custom to arrange once each summer a combined field day for the volunteers in the hills and the Gurkha battalions and the mountain battery that lay at the foot of them. This would be a very popular occasion. All the shops and offices would close down and release all the white employés, and everyone who could would get into khaki clothing and shoulder his Martini and hie to the rendezvous in front of the church. The civil surgeon, who was medical officer, would join the other two messengers of comfort, the chaplain to the corps in the Anglican interest and the Belgian priest for that of Rome, to stand cheek by jowl in the supernumerary rank. The original sergeant-major of the corps, who had helped to blow up the magazine at Delhi or some other tragic event, would be carried to see the parade in a dandy, his large wife, the quondam army schoolmistress, with him. It was this very lady who once said to the very imposing

lady of a small but very famous commander-in-chief: "It was my good man, your ladyship, who taught your good man his drill."

After the heat of the battle it was the wont of the volunteer corps to entertain its lady friends at a picnic lunch under the pines and the deodars, while the general had an equally select party under his pet chestnut. So, as may be imagined, the volunteer field-day was much looked forward to, and the ladies of the station would turn out in their prettiest blouses and brightest parasols. It was Francis Bacon who said: "I know not how it is, but the soldier's heart turns to wine as it turns to love, probably because perils demand to be paid in pleasures." or words to that effect. At any rate, all the ladies were there, and as it was best that the battle should take place where they could see, it was the usual thing for the regulars from below to advance in due and ancient form up the sides of the cart road and deploy below the mall, and through the school grounds and the orchards. Then from the stone parapets of the mall and the last curve of the tonga road the defenders would pour volley after volley on the heads of the advancing foe from the plains, till the beautiful hillside reeked of villainous saltpetre, and all the world applauded.

On this occasion all had been arranged as usual. The defenders had been skilfully posted, Men

with flags wagged them busily from various points, for all the world as if sending messages. The general and his staff were there with the necessary quota of umpires; the stage was ready and half the performers. But the other half tarried. Along the mall behind the soldiers parasols moved and dresses fluttered, and conversation hummed; but what was pleasant enough at first soon became monotonous. The general had twice gone round the volunteer positions and had said all that could suitably be said about them. Ladies were already asking silly questions. The staff saw danger-signals in the colour of his shaven gill. Everybody felt rejoiced that he was not in command of the missing enemy. The commander of the volunteers, a distinguished and determined member of society in his more accustomed rôle, felt it absurd that the rather dreaded contest of wits should be postponed. Ten o'clock, ten-thirty, eleven, eleven-thirty, still no sign; all the fizz was out of the soda, all the fun out of the play, and worse—General Bangs himself made a fool of, and that before all the admiring fair. The morning breeze had dropped, and only now and again a dust devil pirouetted along the mall; past high twelve, and where in the name of everything evil were those infernal Chinese and their thrice infernal colonel? Suddenly from a mountain top overhanging the

station, twelve hundred feet above and three thousand yards away, burst a fleecy puff of smoke, and then down the breeze rolled the cannons' opening roar, followed by another and another. A moment or two later two panting Gurkhas arrived, one with a handkerchief round his rifle, and they bore a written message addressed "To the officer commanding the garrison of —," and this is how it ran: "*I occupy the Dunga heights commanding the town with six mountain guns and two battalions. I summon the town to surrender.*"

What had happened was this. The commander of the garrison in the cantonment at the foot of the hills, whom we will call Colonel Mountain, for obvious reasons had felt in a lighter vein. The battue on the mall was *vieux jeu* to him, and he and his soldiery pined for something new. Instead of tramping through the dust of the turnpike road, and past the tantalising odours of the brewery, he had made a long detour and an early start. Intending to emerge through the forest on to the heights above the town soon after ten, he had arrived there after a difficult climb two hours later than he had reckoned on. The men were tired, and the mountain gunner wanted to rest his mules and off-saddle, and, as another commander-in-chief had said, "Gooners and Goorrkhas, they're divils" as regards resting

tired men and mules. So it was hoped that a summons to surrender might clinch matters.

But the general had no intention of balking the volunteers and the ladies of an affray. A staff officer was called. "Get into communication with Colonel Mountain on the helio." In a few minutes the heliograph was "tempestuously at play." Send the following message: "*From General Bangs. The garrison of this town has been unexpectedly reinforced by four battalions of infantry and two mountain batteries, who are at once moving to attack you. Please say what you propose to do.*"

"That'll make them sit up," quoth the general, and the audience tittered. In a few minutes once again flickered dot and dash from the mountain top. "From officer commanding on Dunga heights." Colonel Mountain was an old soldier, not in the Pickwickian sense of "old soldier, old blackguard; young soldier, young blackguard," but versed in the ways of the world and knowledge of how to take it, and imbued with the idea that enough was as good as a feast. He had been up since 2 A.M., and had climbed the best part of sixteen miles on his flat feet, as a subaltern put it. At any rate, there was not enough stimulus to make it desirable to start a battle against a few volunteers backed by four thousand phantoms. So this is how his answering message ran: "*The archangel Gabriel*

and ten thousand of the heavenly host have unexpectedly come to my assistance. I remain where I am."

An awful silence fell on those around the general, while "redder, ever redder, grew the general's shaven gill." Words failed even that distinguished officer himself, till suddenly someone could stand the strain no longer, and tittered out loud. A roar of laughter greeted the timely explosion. The latent bump of humour rose within the general, who growled "Cease fire," and "Come and get some lunch."

Then, as the defenders and the fair were finishing lunch, the enemy battalions came tramping down to their rest and halting-ground. First the skirl of the pipes through the pine forest, and then the shrill wail of the fife, playing in some irony a derisive quickstep. As the jinketty gun mules filed past to the open space below Strawberry Bank for an outspan, and the long line of Kilmarnock caps bobbed down the road, the softened general sent an invitation for "that d——d Chinese colonel to come and have lunch," which he did, surprised to find the atmosphere serene. But then "Paris speaks not with Menelaus when Helen sits at his feet."

BY THE HOAR APPLE-TREE.

"Once upon a time I, Chuang Tzu, dreamed I was a butterfly, fluttering hither and thither. To all intents and purposes I was a butterfly. I was conscious only of following my senses as a butterfly. I was unconscious of my individuality as a man. Suddenly I awoke, and then I was myself again. Now I do not know whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly dreaming I am a man."

So wrote the famous "Butterfly" Chuang, the Chinese philosopher of the fifth and fourth centuries before Christ, and so do I now write the following, wondering if I be John Nye, a gunner of the Cinque Ports Artillery, dreaming of the Great Conquest, or if I be John Nye, the lame Saxon of the Sussex Weald, dreaming I am an artilleryman of the twentieth century.

The hoar apple-tree still stands on Telham Down, and the great Roman road to London still passes through Silver Hill, and here lie I, Nye the Saxon, dreaming I am an artilleryman, or I, Nye the artilleryman, dreaming I am the Saxon peasant. If I be Nye the peasant, I spent last night sleeping by the gorse on Telham Down, and if I be the gunner, I lay out in bivouac alongside the

forty-pounder train halfway from Silver Hill to Battle. . . .

And this is what Nye the Saxon saw, musing under the gorse on the open down, looking over to Peofvensea and Bulverhythe, too lame to serve the Godwinsson as a soldier, so employed as a silent watch. It was mid-October, and the heavy dew that was almost frost glistened on his fair beard and on the hair of his woollen jerkin. And this is what he mused on, staring into the violet haze and the mist from off the sea. How for six dull months that summer had he seen King Harold keep his militia together on the Saxon shore, lest the Norman find wind to cross the Channel. For these same six months of western and northerly winds the English fleet had swept that Channel, and the militia had murmured, as militia will, at the time spent away from home and harvest, with never a fight to hearten them. How, weary at heart, King Harold had dismissed them to their crops, had set out himself to London by the Roman road, and had ordered his fleet to the Thames. Then as he got to London, lo! Harold Haardrada, the Norseman, another claimant to the throne of England, with Tostig Godwinsson, the King's own brother, had landed in the North—so ran the news—no man quite knew where.

Since the prior evil is usually the more pressing, away north had tramped the King and his house-

hold troops, praying always that no south wind should blow till they marched down again, and all the time the Roman high street slipping away behind them.

The day after the town of York had surrendered to Harold of Norway, the victor at Fulford Fields, Harold of England and his South Saxons, with half the English Danes of the Danelagh, swept through York, to find the Norseman mustering his men on Stamford Flats to enter in triumph the surrendered town. As both the armies struggled into line, there came the parley from brother Tostig Godwinsson, the outlaw, that drew forth the answer that rang through the length and breadth of Merrie England: . . . "The terms that Harold of England offers his cousin Harold Sigurdsson of Norway . . . seven foot of English soil, or since he be a tall man, as much more as he be taller than other men."

Taking the invaders in some surprise, the English fell on them by the Derwent and Stamford Bridge, till the fight rolled up to the Landwaster, the ruthless banner of Harold of Norway, beneath which he fell, for all his pains, and with him outlaw Tostig.

And such of the Norsemen who escaped the English anger fled away to their ships at Recal, and were chased up and down the high seas by the English cruisers. Then, as Harold of England sat

at banquet a day or two later in York, in honour of his victory and to rest his tired troops, news came that the wind had shifted south, and that William the Norman had landed on the Saxon shore, three days after the battle of Stamford Bridge.

So back to London, down the Roman road, hurried Harold and his housecarles and such of his levies as had enough discipline to follow him, and as he marched the local militia tailed in to his call. As he came south to London, with Gurth and Leofwine, stopping by the way to pray to his Holy Rood, many a tale of woe and alarm was brought to him. How the invaders, shipload on shipload, galley-crew on galley-crew, Breton and Norman, Frenchman and freelance, with all the borrowed trappings of Europe, had landed on the old flats at Peofvensea, where Julius Cæsar himself perhaps had landed over a thousand years before. Where, after him, had landed, men said, Ælle and Cissa and every Jute and Saxon raider that had now become the English.

Fast from Peofvensea had ridden an English thegn, with tales of the countless hordes of French and of all the ravaging of fair Sussex and the burning of the newly garnered crops. But Harold in London tarried perforce, tarried and swore,—swore again by his Holy Rood, while his tardy militia gathered and his housecarles rested, too

old a soldier to be tempted to the coast ere he was ready, And since Harold would not come, and William dared not leave his base and his entrenchment on Hastings heights, the Norman must needs try and draw the English down to him. And draw them he did, by more rape and raid and fire, till at last Harold, and Cedric and Gurth his brothers, marched south before their time for very anger. But the little Englanders Edwin and Morcar, the Eorles of the North, sat and sulked at home, so that the men of Kent and Sussex and the Danelagh alone met the storm — which was exactly as William had planned. Sore tried had been Harold the King, whom William and his enemies called Harold Godwinsson—though Godwinsson he was and lawful King as well,—by a summons to vacate the throne, by specious offers of arbitration, and finally by tempting challenge to single combat. The which was so enticing that Harold near forgot his kingship.

So it had come about that by Friday, the 13th of October, the King and his South Saxons formed up on the heights on Senlac Down, which some men call Saint-lache, athwart the narrow isthmus followed by the Roman road, hard by the hoar apple-tree that every south-west wind had swept year in, year out, for a hundred years and more. Then and there the English dug themselves in with ditch and fence and wattle. Seven miles

away, the invaders sat in their fortified camp on Hastings Bluff, their way to march out and forage afield barred and blocked by the English across the Roman highway, whose flanks rested on the Peofvensea marsh to the west and the Rother fens to the east. Each leader had manœuvred for the best grip, and the Englishman had won it, thanks to Harold's knowledge of war and country, so that the Norman could but attack an entrenched line or starve.

All this and more, or less, floated through the mind of Saxon Nye, too lame to join the Telham levy, but active and acute enough to be left to lie out the night through on Telham Down to watch for the coming Norman. And so Nye sat a-dreaming, a dream within a dream, in the hoar-frost on the down, that early morning of the 14th of October 1066. Away to the west and below stretched the white cliffs of Bulverhythe, as they stretch to this day, and where men say William gave a soldier all the land he could cover with a bull's hide. Out beyond the marshes of Saxon Peofvensea and Roman Anderida lay ship on ship and galley on galley, beached high on the fore-shore, glistening white in the rising sun of the crisp October morning. All seemed well with the land, from the great grey moor and marsh below to the sun-flushed coppice atop the down.

As Nye stretched himself, he looked over across

to Senlac, and saw the long line of wattle and earth entrenchment, and high on the mound by the hoar apple-tree, that some said the British of old had planted, the flag of England. Bitterly he cursed his lame leg, that he too could not be there by the standard, and then, turning south to Silver Hill, cursed himself that could not even keep his watch aright. While he had slumbered through the frosty hours of dawn, the Norman had filed from his camp, and was even now deploying over Telham Down, so that the watcher by the patch of gorse and broom had no course but to stay where his own carelessness had caught him, like many another foolish sentry before and since. And, as he watched, the great French host broke and formed by companies and troops and squadrons, while Duke William himself rode to the front and donned his hauberk before all his force. Backsey-fore he donned it too, for an omen, and swore that it was right, ay, and that black was white too, if he, Duke William "Par le splendeur Dex" so willed it, and none should say him nay. By him rode Bishop Odo his brother, armed and swinging his mace, Taillefer who sang so well, and close behind him Count Rollo, with Toustain the White, and the consecrated banner. He on the Flemish horse must be Ralph of Couchies, and with him famous

Walter Gifford of Langueville, and many another too of whom Nye had heard the white pilgrim speak in the village of Saxe a fortnight before. A goodlie company in all truth, to commit high trespass in Merrie England and burn honest Saxon homesteads!

And all the while Harold the King and his housecarles and the cheery English militia looked down from their palisade on Senlac heights, every man from King to kern afoot like sturdy Englishmen who hated foreign fashion.

Then Nye saw the Norman form his host in three solid divisions, archers and crossbows in front, then the pikemen, and lastly the mailed squadrons. Away on the left by the lower ground pressed the Bretons; in the centre, towards the high ground where waved the English standard and the dragon of Wessex, headed the Norman column itself; and on the right along the road the French company.

As he watched, he saw young Aluric, a fellow watcher, dart from a forward tuft of broom and hurry back to tell his King the latest news, and as he looked again and swore in impotence the whole line moved down from Telham to the swamp below and up the Senlac rise. Then as the challengers breasted the rise and arrows flew, the din of battle came across to him. "Aie

Dex! Aie Dex!" from the Norman, "Ut! Ut!" from the English, who jeered again at the fierce flushed faces that pressed up to the palisade. Axe on hauberk, mace and morning star, javelin echoing on metallad shield, sword ringing on helm, hammer and cut and thrust, die and be damned, and the devil take the hindmost! . . . and the Norman-French recoiled from the high palisade and the wall of English shields, till Nye near shouted for joy, and a frightened hare squealed past him.

Again and again he saw the knights press on, in riot of chargers and revel of blows, and ill went the day for the strangers, while William sat and watched and waited his chance to come, as come it does to every man. Ay, and come it had too, for as the Breton broke before the English, the militia louts must needs break theirs too, and rush forward in unrestrained pursuit. A smile played on the face of the Norman duke. "Bid the Breton reserve charge again," quoth he, "and half-way up the slope let them break and flee untouched." Then the Breton horse swung out and up as the English militia straggled back and re-formed. The sun rose high on the autumn sky and beat on the polished armour, while again the exultant English "Ut! Ut!" came down on the northern breeze. Then as Duke William had planned,

so it came about, for the Bretons turned and fled and the militia again rushed out to chase them. Right across the ground at them charged the Norman mounted reserve, and, taking the broken militia in flank, pressed up and through and over the English line and its half-defended palisade. After them poured the *débris* of the earlier battle. Once through the palisade, the Normans turned right-handed against the English centre, and what was once a battle now became a series of combats. Charge and counter-charge, blow and quick return, and the dead and dying thick below the shields in the unshorn grass, and still the Gonfanon over all. Till now the stern grey eyes of the King had watched the stress of battle unmoved, as a reliant leader should; but now with a shout of "Holy Cross, Holy Cross of Waltham!" he and his housecarles tried to turn the scales, till Gurth and Leofwine, the royal brothers, fell. But, dogged and despairing, on fought Harold till he too fell from a flight of arrows, and round him the last of the English thegns and eorles.

Then a great cry went up, that Nye too, crouched in his thicket, heard above the noise of battle. "Harold Godwinsson is dead, dead! Woe! woe for England!" and each broken company fought for space to die, or fought dogged to leave the field and gain the fens,

sore and broken and dismayed, but dogged ever. And the sun sank in the grey behind Beachy Head—and as it sank then so it sinks now, yesterday, to-day, and for ever—and the blue mist rising from the marches hid the writhing French in the Mallefosse, on whom, too eager, an English remnant had fallen and wreaked its bitterness. Hid too the poor clay on Senlac Hill, and the broken squads of militia and the square where the old guard sold their lives. . . . “Aie Dex!” and “Ut! Ut!” and “Woe is me for England!”

Then, since Nye dared not move, he too, weary and sore at heart, must needs weep himself to sleep in the gorse, and dream he was Nye the Cinque Ports artilleryman, or how in a thousand years we all forget the things that puzzle us now. For as he slept, so sleeps the pride of other days, and John Nye the gunner, dreaming of Senlac field in his bivouac shelter, turned at the sound of *réveillé* to see the dark barrels of those dogs of war, the 40-pounder train, parked on Telham Down, hard by the King's turnpike. Then as the sun rose to the trumpet call, and a turret of the Abbey glinted rose-red, there was no sign that the last day of the English had ever risen on Telham, or that, as Time fingers on his rosary, please God, it ever would.

GRANDE GUERRE.

THIS is the story of a move in *Grande Guerre* for almost the first time that the British took the field with a trained war staff. . . . The story as it appeared to the pawn who watched by the way. For nearly eight weary weeks Lord Methuen and Piet Cronje had watched each other on the Modder, and daily had the forest of tents on the south side of the river grown, as the "grand army," to quote the wags, gathered. For several days now had Cronje watched the forest from the top of Magersfontein Kopjie, and dug and dug and dug again till he had almost the lines of a Plevna. Daily had Cassandra, in the shape of the good German gunner Albrecht, said, "Cronje, Cronje, take care of your left flank," and Cronje had said "*Ach nein*, the English will never leave their railway line." And again Albrecht would say, "Beware of Jacobsdal," the small Dutch *dorp* above Brown's drift that was his extreme left.

While Cronje watched and slept, the English buried their dead and held sports, and laughed

at their own and others' adventures in what the poor folk at Home called the "black week," which was red more like, by the bar near Modder station. And the reservist barber from Truefit's, who would cut your hair with the horse-clippers, would say, much as did Albrecht—"And don't you think, sir, as 'ow Lord Methēwen should go round by this 'ere Jacobstown?"

And so the dust blew and blew, and enteric fever raged, and the naval guns at sundown daily fired a few rounds into the Boer lines by the simple and cheery process of "Tip her up, Quartermaster, tip her up," and a long-range Krupp would reply, and all the while men said that "Bobs is coming, and K. too," and every possible tale held sway for an hour in the camp, after the manner of armies. Sappers sweated long into the night laying rows of sidings, and up went tents and more tents, till Cronje must have thought half England in canvas and glued to their railway line, which was exactly the impression that it was meant that he should imbibe. Then quite suddenly one afternoon there was a sound of cheering that ran along from west to east at the front of the camps. It was Bobs who had arrived, and was seeing his army. But still the tents increased, and the dust blew deeper, and nothing came of it. And any man who could pretend to know what was doing could command a drink at any camp.

One morning the pawn's major called to him and said, "Young feller, Hender has arrived. I am one after his own heart,—we will go and extract some news." Now it should be said that the major had come from that hall of learning which, in the view of the older officer, adds but "impudence to ignorance," and had sat at the feet of "Hender" when that ever-lamented soldier was laying the seeds of a General Staff, and starting for the first time in the British service a school of thought. On which account the major should have known better than to try and get news from the master, still less to expect to get it. However, over the deviation we journeyed, and came to the siding where the headquarters lay in railway carriages, and among them, in a goods-van, sat "Hender," with table and chair, and maps and orders. We passed the time o' day cheerily enough, and after some chat the major said, "And now, I suppose, colonel, you are sitting there engaged, as you so often instilled into us, in trying to think what the enemy is thinking of." "Well," said Hender, "would you really like to know what I am thinking of?" to which an eager assent was given. "I am wondering very much," said the great man, "whether there will be tinned sausages for lunch, for we don't get much to eat here," . . . which was quite a useful lesson in the propriety

of trying to worm out information, and also, perhaps, shows how much creature comforts hold unconscious sway in even a soldier.

So that day passed like the next, except perhaps there seemed less artillery and cavalry watering in the Modder. That night again, I, the pawn, strolled across the deviation bridge after dark to dine with a chum, on such fare as an over-strained commissariat and the daily dust-storm could provide. But the dust-storm had died away, and the moon was out, and peace lay on the camp, and the white tents glistened and the camp-fires twinkled. There had been something better than trek ox, with something to it, and the world seemed a good world as we lay on the sand and smoked. The army, too, was evidently in some spirits. We could hear songs and snatches from different camp-fires. The song of "Cock Kruger" was the favourite, and it came over the water from the cavalry camp:—

"Who killed Paul Kruger?
I, said Colonel Hall,
With my cannon-ball
I killed Paul Kruger.

Who'll dig his grave?
I, said Baden Powell,
With my spade and trowel
I'll dig his grave.

PIKE AND CARRONADE.

Who'll sing his dirge?
I, said Lord Methewen,
For I know the tuen,
I'll sing his dirge.

All the Boers in the land lay a-sobbing and a-sighing,
When they heard that old Paul Kruger lay dying . . ."

and so forth and so on, to everyone's mutual satisfaction. From the officers' mess of the 19th could be heard the old Yorkshire refrain,—

"And I drink to thee, friend, as my friend drank to me,
And I charge thee, friend, as my friend charged me,
That thou drink to thy friend as my friend drank to me,
And the more we drink together the merrier we shall be,"

which they certainly were. From another corner, from a regiment that had evidently been in Tirah, came the old Tirah refrain, born of much picketing of heights and chasing of elusive night snipers, "We'll catch the flying jackass in the morning." Which might very well have become a popular refrain in Africa, as the burgher became as elusive as the Afridi.

Where we were sitting on the *pat*, the sappers had laid several sidings off the rail just before it reached the Modder River bridge, or what Mickie McDermott the ex-prize-fighter and dynamitard from "Joannie'sberg" had left of it. Half a dozen and more of them lay, black and rusty, with no bright top to catch the moonlight. The singing by the camp-fires had died

away, and except for the great electric beams from the Kimberley searchlights that flashed on the clouds in answer to these from the Naval searchlight on the truck by the bridge, and the click of the latter's shutters, all was quiet in the camp. Conversation had wandered fitfully to old days in Burma, the column in the jungle, and the chunking steamer by the *ghat*, the skirmish by the bamboo scrub, and thence back to frontier days, the raider and the scorching foothills in June, or the snow on the juniper in the pass in winter,—all incidents of small wars and the lessons they teach: wariness and endurance, no doubt, those first foundations of a good soldier, but which teach little of *Grande Guerre*, save perhaps the universal truth that an army moves upon its stomach.

Suddenly, silently, without even a shunting whistle, long black lines glided in front of us, almost as an apparition. On each of the six sidings were long trains of trucks. As the trains drew up, from all sides, equally suddenly and silently, came long lines of infantry, who were up in the trucks and away without more ado, almost before their presence could be realised. As the first lot of trains glided out, a second series took their place, and one realised that some big flit was on, which the gossiping army, to its chagrin, had got no wind of. A grand

defeat of the coffee-housers this. Something big doing, no doubt, but what? However, since it did not concern the pawn and his unit, and as the first duty of a soldier is to sleep while he may, and the second duty of eating when he can had been fulfilled, it only remained to turn in and see what the morrow and the staff would bring forth.

The morrow dawned as usual on the sea of tents as numerous as ever, and the blue hills a few miles off where lay Piet Cronje, between the *Roineks* and the coveted Kimberley. Lazily, as usual, the Naval guns fired their morning salute at the Brethren. Perfunctorily, as usual, the outposts of Lord Methuen's division had stood to arms before dawn and been relieved. Cronje, no doubt, had once more remarked to Albrecht, his chief of artillery, "What I tell, Albrecht, the English will never leave their railway." And Albrecht, tired perhaps of unheeded prophecy and such strategy as his memories of St Privat and the attack by the Guard had left him, may have refrained from saying, "Beware of your left flank."

And all the while the whole of Lord Roberts's main army, three divisions and a cavalry division, were trekking hard all the previous night, and long into the day, to turn that left flank by "This 'ere Jacobstown," for all they were worth.

From Belmont and Grasspan and Honeynest Kloof, and every other siding between the Modder and the Orange, an army and its transport was marching, by Ramdam, on Jacobsdal and its drifts, Wegdrai and Rondeval. Before the Brethren had an inkling of what was doing the cavalry division was over the Riet and approaching the Modder at a gallop, and the infantry streaming after them. It was practically the first instance in our history of a piece of good and successful staff work on modern lines, and for its simplicity and its quietness is well worthy of remembrance. That the *veldt* was barren and the water scarce, and the marching therefore hard, and the commons short, has nothing to do with the case, for that is the way of armies and the soldiery have to put up with it, grumble they never so heartily.

Nor does it matter that some link in the new chains failed, and a main food convoy was captured, and much harm caused thereby, because accidents of this sort are in the working factor of safety and margin of error, just as much as were D'Erlon's wanderings on the 16th of June, or Ney's failure to hold the English when he had found them, or even Grouchy's leisurely pursuit of the Prussians. All the elements of *Grande Guerre* were there: the ruthless pushing of the cavalry advance regardless of the

prayers of the cavalry commanding officers, always so hard to disregard, as to the state of their horses; the artillery waggons cut loose by the way, all to attain the one object, regardless of lesser happenings. Then again, the forcing of the tired army to make an effort it believed it could not, lest Cronje escape from the toils, regardless of the feelings and grumblings of officers and men. Then at the beginning, the massing of camps at the Modder, the sudden drafting up of troops and transport, and especially mounted troops, from all quarters when the train was all laid, the complete misleading of the enemy, the accurate timings, the silent fittings, the baffling of the coffee-housers, the feeding of war correspondents on hot air, all contributing to illustrate the methods and happenings of business-like war on a large scale, that we have not known since the great war, and the "finest Commissariat officer since Moses." The same thing was repeated when the "grand army" left Bloemfontein for the north, but by that time the war was in hand, as it were, and the silence and secrecy and excitement of the first successful attempt that had stirred men's hearts had gone. You don't reproduce this sort of situation more than once.

So what began with "Hender" and his sausages ended up at Paardeberg and the tramp of the

divisions, and for a time resembled that of the famous pace of the Legions on "the Legions' road to Rimini," viz., "twenty-four miles in eight hours, neither more nor less," as they swung through "this 'ere Jacobstown" singing "Who killed Paul Kruger?"

Such was one of the rare glimpses of *Grande Guerre* that is vouchsafed to the British soldier, under one who might be described in the American metaphor: "Yes, sir! The greatest general since Julius Cæsar, and a durned sight prettier fighter." Or perhaps the Irish way is neater, as the jarvie said to his fare a-crossing the "Phanix,"—"And were ye in South Africa, sorr! Ah, Misther Roberts was there too, sorr, was he not, and he did well, sorr? And fwhy wouldn't he?" For the good soldier has naught but praise for his leader, whether he be Buller the undaunted, or Bobs the successful, or "Nosey," or "old *Khabardar*," and "our only general," and all the fighting leaders that England has turned out through the ages.

SIC TRANSIT GLORIA MUNDI.

"Battered chain gangs of the orlops, grizzled drafts of years gone by."
—*The Galley Slave.*

GREY morning in old Chelsea, one Sunday in early autumn, and the leaves of the pollard limes slowly falling, as I stepped inside the gates of Chelsea Hospital, and with that one step entered the old-world atmosphere of a century ago. Once within those peaceful courts, one could not have been surprised to meet the Duke of Wellington, in frock-coat and cravat starting for his morning ride, or even the old Duke of York himself, in a mood alternating kindness and choler.

Neither of the old Dukes, however, met my gaze, but up and down the pink pavement, in front of Old Rowley's statue, marched stiff and erect, as was their Sunday wont, one solitary pair, a tall drummer and a short fifer, quavering out, "Those merry Christ Church bells," bidding all old soldiers to prayer.

Into church tramped the old soldiers, stalwart and crippled, the blind and the palsied, cocked

hat and old Georgian coat, just as they tramped when Herkomer painted his famous picture—or, for the matter of that, as they had tramped every Sunday for the last two centuries since Nell Gwynne had her way. Into the famous flag-hung chapel, where, from among the carvings of Grinling Gibbons and the painting of Sebastiani Ricci, Robert Gleig and George Mathias, ex-officers of the Iron Duke both, and many another chaplain before and since, would endeavour to soften the stout old hearts, whose workings remain to the end hidden from all men, behind those grim exteriors.

And so the column filed in, as I had often seen it file before, but to my eyes it was the change in the medals that marked the lapse of time. My father had been one of the officers of the establishment, and among these old soldiers I had been born and bred till I too joined the army, and when I was a lad I had been friends with half the inmates, and knew their histories and yarns by heart. In those days a few old Waterloo men were still crooning out their lives on the southerly benches, while here and there some survivor of Arthur Wellesley's glories still kept a stiff upper lip.

Younger warriors there were galore, and these it was that the medal ribbons marked as missing. Men who had yelped wild fury with old Comber-

mere at the breach at Bhurtpur at the second siege, when the first gentleman in England sat the throne, or had crawled bleeding through the *pangies* into the Mindoon Pagoda in the Ava War; men of the 13th foot from the "illustrious garrison," and 40th men from William Nott's old toughs, aged and worn, but cheery always; veterans from the two Panjab campaigns, and here and there a 22nd man from Sir Charles Napier's force in Scinde. Men, too, who had seen the French-trained Mahrattas, barely beaten at Maharajpore and Punniar, where hardly a British soldier expected them to fight; John Company's gunners from Harry Tomb's or Jack Olpherts' troops of Bengal Horse Artillery, or Blue Caps who had followed Niel to relieve Lucknow, each and all of them full of memories of the early Victorian Wars, to be recalled by the old-world stories of the warriors, and by the glittering medals that hall-stamped the wearer's tales with truth.

Among those I first remember was old William Asher of H.M. 43rd foot, who as a drummer-boy had beaten his drum standing like poor Ben Battle with "both his legs in Badajoz's breaches," and thenceforward had followed the Duke in all his battles and sieges from Salamanca to Waterloo; for thirty years and more of old age he had beaten the pensioners' Sunday drum,

for the glory of God and the 43rd foot, till life beat feeble, and he too with ninety odd summers to his name slipped quietly out of the muster-roll. Old William, as we called him, had been wounded in the head in the Peninsula, and his skull had been "trephined" — a piece removed and closed by a silver plate, fitting in much as a tea-caddy lid fits the caddy. Another young rogue and I used to clamber on to the bench beside him, out in the old Ranelagh, remove the plate, and tickle his brain with a straw, so that he chuckled immensely, and perhaps broke into rickety song.

Dugald Mackay of the forty-twa was the last Waterloo man in the Hospital, and his one story, never stale to our ears, was how he "would ha' dinged his bagonet into Buonaparty himself" but for a dozen French lancers who had ridden him down, all of which we believed, and marvelled to see him clap the governor on the back, he being a field-marshal, and tell him he was "a brow laddie," and the two would hold converse in Gaelic and exchange snuff.

The great hall of the Hospital, wainscotted in oak, is the old soldiers' club-room, where they play old-world games forgotten outside before Queen Victoria came to the throne, amid tattered flags captured in a hundred battles. Imperial Eagles by the dozen, Moghul and Mahratta flags

by the score, and — whisper it quietly — “old glory” itself, taken perhaps by Ross of Bladensburg, when he burnt the Senate and President’s house in Washington as a warning and a lesson, not long after the *Shannon* beat the *Chesapeake* to retrieve our fallen sea prestige. Foremost among the games is that of Spanish Pole, or “checks,” a glorified draughts, on a board of one hundred and forty-four squares and thirty pieces a side, that men say the British learnt from the armies of Gustavus Adolphus. Be that as it may, such a game of skill is Spanish Pole, that were it shown to the true draught-player, he would straightway forswear draughts, as the bridge-player has deserted whist. Two great “check” players were “Big” Joe, and “Little” Joe—other names they had none.

Big Joe had been with the 22nd in Scinde, and would talk lovingly of “Charlie Năpeer” the soldier’s friend, and hardest of campaigners; many a Beloochi had he bayoneted at Meeanee, and bore a big red scar over his forehead for his pains.

Little Joe had never seen a shot fired in anger, and had been the solitary piper of the establishment for over forty years, as the books could testify. A brown wig he wore, and no man knew how old he was, or whence his odd five-foot-one figure came. Big Joe always beat him

at "checks," as "Charlie Näpeer beat the h'Amirs," and Little Joe was always ready to fight again.

Outside my father's quarters John Irvine, late of the Inniskillen Dragoons, was always the military constable on duty, and a sweet-natured lovable Irishman he was, even though cruelly flouted by Ivy, our Irish cook. He had lost a thumb in the charge of the Heavies at Balaclava, and daily returned thanks for his life, like the conscientious Catholic he was.

"Good morning, Irvine," we used to say, "'tis a fine morning." "Glory be to God, sorr, it is," or "Praise be the Virgin, sorr, it is." But never a kind word would Ivy give him for all his honey.

Jonathan Carew, an ex-driver of the Royal Artillery, was at one time my father's batman,—a decent taciturn body, who would never satisfy our curiosity regarding the scenes of his life. He had helped Collingwood Dickson to bring up his eighteen-pounders at Inkerman on that hard-fought 5th of November, and had been in the old "F" troop under D'Aguilar and Goodenough with Colin Campbell in the Relief of Lucknow.

We used to say to him, "What about Inkerman, Carew? Tell us about it." "Well, Master Garge," he would say, "we did 'ave a bit of a brush there, so we did now"; and that was all his simple mind could evolve.

And then, "What about Lucknow, Carew, and 'F' troop?" "Well, Master Garge, we 'ad a bit of a brush there too, yes, a bit of a brush it were," and that was how he spoke of driving the right gun of the old "F" troop to within a hundred yards of a rebel battery by the iron bridge on the Gumti. A fine-looking man was old Carew, and always created a sensation at my Dame's School, when he came in his red coat and medals to fetch me home.

Another old friend, whose name I never learnt, was known to us children as "Butter-by-the-yard," why, I can't remember, save, perhaps, that he came from Cambridge. He had been at Maharajpore, where Sir Hugh Gough had so unexpected a battle, and the round-shot trundled through our columns, with which Miss Gough and other ladies marched, riding at the head, to clear the dust, on the top of elephants. "Sir Hugh, 'ee swore summat terrible 'ee did, and said as 'ow he didn't want no danged petticoats a-muddling up with 'is guns," quoth Butter-by-the-yard.

James Kirch-hoffer the Palatinoch was a huge rheumatic guardsman, who wore the French decoration for valour among his Crimean honours; six foot two he stood, even when shrunk with infirmity and premature age, the legacy of two Crimean winters. It was told of him that he had bayoneted eight Russians at Inkerman.

And so one could wander on, from the Great Hall round to the Light-Horse Ward, through the Ranelagh and Dutch William's avenues, up past the Chillianwallah monument and the Waterloo cannon, each place peopled by some old soldier whose favourite haunt it was, the romance of whose stories had caught one's boyish imagination.

Warworn and distinguished as were many of the rank and file, the officers of the Establishment were more so; Sidney Cotton, the Governor, who had faced the music at Peshawar in the summer of '57, with John Lawrence behind him; old Pat Grant, his successor, also of Indian fame, the finest figure to look on that ever held the baton, and a sight for young soldiers to remember.

Herbert Gall of the 14th Light Dragoons, the Lieutenant-Governor, had lost a thumb and very nearly his life following Havelock in the wild charge at Ramnagur in '49, and after him came Richard Wadeson, sometime colonel of the 75th, who had won the Victoria Cross and his commission at the storming of Delhi.

Among those in my earliest days was fine old John Davern of the 88th, a captain of invalids in his 90th year, who lived in the quaint officers' quarter alongside the Light-Horse Ward. He had led a dissolute company of the "Faugh-a-ballaghs" through thirteen world-renowned battles in the Peninsula, and drowsed out his old age in the sun

o' summers, wearing his uniform and a red night-cap, ready to throw a mild Orange oath at any who disturbed him.

Another captain of invalids was famous old "Jolly" Green of the Rifle Brigade, now dead too, alas! who had fought alone with eight mutinous troopers in the Trans-Gogra jungles, killing seven ere his men found him, sadly wounded; yet survive he did, minus one arm and a thumb of the other, and with such a network of sabre cuts on his sturdy body as must have been seen to be believed.

John Irby had lost his leg as a subaltern in the Quarries, and had come straight from the Crimea to the Hospital with his bride, where he served as adjutant for forty years from boyhood to old age, till he too died as the toughest must; for,

"Be the day short or be the day long,
At length it ringeth to evensong."

Once or twice a-week, under our windows, come summer come winter, a company of veterans would parade at the infirmary gate, to bury a comrade, often two or three, and follow the bier through the old corridors to the flag-hung chapel, while one solitary drummer and Little Joe the fifer, with muffled drum and squealing fife, would wail out the "Adeste Fideles," "The Old Hundredth," or "The Land o' the Leal," till the old squares echoed again to the dirge.

On the 29th of May, King Charlie's day, the feast of the Restoration, the able-bodied men of the six companies of invalids still parade in the centre court, every man with an oak leaf and oak apple in his hat, and give three cheers for King Charles, the founder, and then three cheers for the reigning sovereign. Old Rowley's statue in the middle is decked with boughs in memory of his concealment in the oak-tree and escape from Cromwell's troopers after the "crowning victory."

In the Cupola between the chapel and the Great Hall, and in the Hall itself, hang trophies of arms from the Tower armoury; matchlock and fusil, harquebus and halbert, flintlock, pike and bayonet, breastplate and morion, horse-pistol and blunderbuss, in goodly keeping with the spirit of the place, while in the corners stand the famous old leather black-jacks in which army beer used to be served, and which men say are nothing but the high legs cut off the long boots of the said Cromwell's troopers, the knee-pieces joined for a lip, and a bottom sewn at the ankle.

Outside the front gates stood in old days Jew's Row and Paradise Row (the former famous for the merry picture of the "News of Waterloo"), now pulled down to make way for red-brick flats and mansions. In these old streets lived some of the wives of the pensioners, married for the sake of a parlour wherein to smoke a pipe, and lo!

when one died the widower straightway cast about him for another, so that he might have foothold outside the hospital. Their method of courting used to be, and for aught I know is now, to take out their dinners and lay them at the feet of their innamorata, and it was no unusual thing for a lady with a comfortable parlour to receive two or three dinners a-day and be hard put to it which to choose. There is on record the story of one William Hiseland who "married for a parlour" when 103, and enjoyed his portion for several years to follow.

The veteran soldier, the ancient Pistol, much as the ancient Mariner, of all races and all ages, seems to exist but in one or two different forms. One, the grim and grizzled knave, taciturn and little given to prate of his adventures, who only pleads, and that under pressure, to having seen a "bit of a brush" like our friend Carew the artillery driver. Of such, doubtless, Corporal Praise-the-Lord-Barebones of the Protector's Horse was a forerunner and a sample. The other, the cheery hearty *raconteur*, *bon camarade* always, with his "*Marlbrook s'en va-t-en guerre*" demeanour, is to be met with in every book from Shakespeare to Lever and Scott to Kipling, and among the veterans at Chelsea as often as anywhere else.

Uncle Toby "who swore so in Flanders" was

but sib to the men who "groused" in the trenches before Sebastopol or in the thick white dust of Lord Methuen's waiting camp on the Modder.

And so, as one old soldier is like another, the long column of greybeards that filed into church that Sunday was like similar columns in ages past,—for the veteran of the Afghan and Egyptian wars is growing vastly like him of the Peninsula. Yet one wonders if young Thomas of to-day, pert and clad in a mustard suiting, can ever be grey, grizzled, and stately—of course he can. The *fin de siècle* private will become the typical veteran, just as, at the Service clubs, the same old colonel, or one exactly like him, has occupied the same arm-chair ever since clubs and colonels were invented.

Or just as at the hunt dinner to the farmers, the flashy young farmer with his saucy tie may be seen in all stages of development towards the sturdy old John Bull of eighty summers, who gets up to say—"Oi've been varming now for nigh on sixty year, and I tell all you young varmers that Oi never knew no 'unting as 'urt the la-and."

The green leaf turns to the sere, leaf by leaf, exactly as did the leaf of last year; the beauty of to-day is the dowager of to-morrow, and it takes but a generation for "that young devil Bangs" of the Light Dragoons to be "poor old Bangs" of the "Senior," with perhaps not a soul to remember

that Bangs was the best cross-country rider of his day, or the lightest-hearted dancer in Merrie England and a gallant soldier to boot.

And so at Chelsea Hospital "Ticunderoga" Tom gives place to "Waterloo Joe," and "Waterloo Joe" to "Inkerman Dick" and even "Maiwand Jimmy"; and all the while Old Rowley from his pedestal hard by the pink pavement must needs look down through the ages, as recruit on recruit matures to veteran, and comes, each in turn, to the old Hospital, that gives the lie, by virtue of his Founder's deed, to those who declared — "He never said a foolish thing, nor ever did a wise one."

THE DRUM ECCLESIASTIC.

"Glory for all, and Heaven for those who bleed."

"THREE ha'pence and tuppence, three ha'pence and tuppence," hammered a horse's hoofs, faint, yet distinct and monotonous, on the rough metalled road that wound down the Kundar Valley, in the frontier province of Yaghistan. An orderly cantering apace on a frontier road was no new thing, but there was a tired sound in the cadence that echoed harmony to the ideas floating unspoken in the minds of two British officers leaning over the rampart of the frontier post of Sinjabi.

It was late summer in '97, that fateful year in India when the fiery cross flew round the border, when the Amir of Kabul almost openly preached *Jihad*¹ and a Crescentade, and tribe after tribe, where least expected, rushed to arms and attacked the nearest British posts that

¹ A religious war.

fringed their frontier for close on a thousand miles.

To bang the drum ecclesiastic, even in Europe, is to raise such trouble that no man knows where it will end. In India, of all places, will the echo rise and fall—north, south, east, and west—and from the viceroy's palace to the law-courts, and from the regimental lines to the merchant's office, the heart of the Mussulman beats in response. The native assistant-commissioner or sessions judge, immersed in law and regulation and troubles of a county twice the size of Yorkshire, hears the drum roll, pauses amidst the pleader's wrangling, and dreams of the brave days of old, and how Mahmud of Ghuzni swept the land for the glory of God and His Prophet; of how fat Brahmins fell to the believer's sword or accepted the painful rite of conversion; how the faithful felled the idols and ruled the land to their great advantage, when Hindu pleaders who wasted a judge's time would have received short shrift from a sharp sword instead of wearing stand-up collars and spring-side shoes. And here the judge perhaps looked at his own English shoes, and the neat English notes he had made on the case before him, and awoke once more to the flowing periods of the "barishtar-at-law," thought of his salary, and decided to wait awhile. But the heart had beat

in time to the tune, "La Allah ha, il Allah ho, o Muhammad rasul al Allah."¹

In the merchant's office in Calcutta the door-keeper also heard the drum, and remembered his Afghan forebears, and the old green sash packed away with the silver bangles beside the illuminated Quoran, and talked to the police sergeant of the hereditary officers of the Great Moghul, and whether the old families would ever come to their own, and the faithful rule the Hindu (and incidentally the British) as in the good days gone; while from the mosque rang out the cry of the muezzin, "Prayer is better than sleep, prayer is better than sleep."

In fanatical Patna the drum had to beat to some purpose. A steady stream of rupees had set towards the church militant, and thin-lipped, high-browed men, with thin moustaches and ragged beards, slipped daily into the third-class carriages that rolled them to the Northern Provinces. In the Panjab unrest was even more manifest. Young men had disappeared from the peaceful Indus villages; open sedition was preached in the big towns. Had not the Turk, the army of the Khalif, actually beaten in war the Christian Greeks, in defiance of Christian Europe? Old officials spoke of the unrest that had stirred when the Maiwand defeat and the

¹ "There is but one God, and Muhammad is His Prophet."

trouble at Sherpur had aroused echoes throughout Hindustan, and of the Mahdi's rise.

Every hill road poured a stream of tongas bringing officers back from leave in the Himalayas, hurrying to rejoin their regiments. Fortunately the fiery cross on the border and the roll of the priestly drum could not travel against the good electric telegraph. On the border the storm had burst in the centre, and again away in the north—everywhere where least expected.

In the native army war had a pleasant prospect: it meant amusement and excitement, honours and rewards, and the old fighting spirit to the fore again; but for the Muhammadan soldiery there was a skeleton at the feast. The rumour had spread that this war was no kicking against the pricks, no goading at the tax-master, but *Jihad*, a solemn religious war, conversion by the sword, the overthrow of the Cross and the triumph of the Crescent and the Prophet. Loyalty to their officers and to their oaths dragged one way, backed by the habit of discipline; their religion, in its re-echo to conquering tradition, the other. Sons of the Crescent and yet ruled by the Cross—here was the disturbing thought. Wisdom said "Tarry" and the drum said "Come."

Away at the frontier post of Sinjabi, in the

Kundar Valley, the effects of the drum had not been realised. The two British officers on the rampart knew that the tribes were flickering into rebellion all the border round, and that trouble might come their way too. That very day, while the relief of the Malakand was in progress, a telegram had reported an actual tribal inroad in the Peshawur Valley, and homesteads sacked and burnt; and at any moment the flame might burst out in the Kundar Valley. Up that very valley a small force of four hundred rifles and two guns was making a tour as escort to a political agent who controlled the tribes, and the lull in the Kundar seemed all the more suspicious in the light of the fire on the more northern border.

Down below the rampart, in the barracks in the horn-work, mighty influences were at work. Sinjabi was the headquarters of the Kundar militia, a purely Muhammadan corps largely enlisted from across the border—set a thief to catch a thief—like the old Black Watch on that other lawless Highland border a century and a half ago.

Three British officers kept twelve hundred wild men together in some imitation of the discipline of a regular corps. After the trio came their friend and zealous coadjutor, Subahdar-major Allahdad Khan Tiwana, a native of the Panjab

Salt Range, and senior native officer of the corps. He, having served through seven campaigns from trooper to rissaldar in Christie's Silladar Horse, had now come as senior native officer to the newly formed militia, with the express purpose of training the mounted portion of that corps. In five years he had gained immense influence over the men of the corps. Afridis, Mahsuds, Turis, Khataks, and men of similar hard-bitten races, all bowed to the influence of the strong and upright horse-soldier from the Salt Range. To his British officers he was a true comrade, on terms of the most affectionate equality, yet never forgot his position as subordinate to the least of the masters at whose hands influence and honour had come to him.

It was not altogether his prowess as a soldier or the prestige of his position that gave him his ascendancy, nor the two deep scars on his forehead that told of the rough-and-tumble charge into the Duranis in the Chardeh Valley, nor yet his skill with sword and rifle. Allahdad Khan was an upright man, who feared God and His Prophet, kept the law, and read the Quoran nightly, expounding the same at times in his village mosque and in the musjid by the barrack gate. Therefore it was that all men looked up to him as a leader not only in his corps, but in every garrison and every village where he was

known—and that meant three parts of the Panjab border.

Never before had Allahdad Khan heard the drum ecclesiastic beaten in *Jihad*; and now, for ten days past and more, letters had been pouring in to him from half the cantonments in Upper India and many a Salt Range village besides. And the question asked was this: "Was this really a *Jihad*? Was it the Crescent against the Cross? Was it time for all Mussulman soldiery to desert the Sirkar they had served so long, and join in the wild rush for faith, and it might be loot, against the unbeliever? Could the good old times be returning?"

And Allahdad Khan was much perplexed, and a glance at his face will give the clue. Clear blue eyes, unfaded with age, looked from under a brow beetling with strength of character and straight purpose; but a long thin nose, a sparse grey moustache with the lower hairs plucked out, and thin tight-closing lips denoted the religious fanatical spirit, at rest perhaps, but present. It was the face of the earnest, relentless Jesuit priest, even of the martyr at the stake. At the back of the man's everyday character, and from behind the blue eyes, shone out the religious fervour which at any time could swamp all other traits.

His father had ridden in the Derajat with

Herbert Edwards, and later to Delhi with Cureton's Horse. The army of Hindustan, Hindus and Mussulmans both, had risen against their masters, but there had been no recognised cry of *Jihad*, and the Mussulmans of the Panjab had helped the masters to recover their own. This was a different case. At his beck nine-tenths of the militia corps would join the enemy. There should be no actual mutiny; the men would melt away to join the rightful side. At his answering advice half the corps in Upper India would do the same, and many a village send its lads, ay, and its old men too, for the matter of that, to the holy war. But then, what about his sahibs, true soldier comrades to him? Ah, well, perhaps it would be enough if he went himself, and was killed for the sake of his faith. But then had not God given him influence to bring his co-religionists to the path of duty? But which duty? Was ever man so perplexed? Heaven and hell, love and duty, old association and the lust of power that haunts true men, all pulling in different directions and dulling the instinct of faith to "the salt." That very day a telegram from a Muhammadan centre had reached him, asking for early reply to their letter; and a well-known moulvi had written much in the words of the Scripture, "If the salt has lost its savour, wherewith shall the salt be salted?" Ay, and

yet the salt had *not* lost its savour. Had not he and the sahib upstairs ridden together in a "Todtenritt" once already? Should he be untrue to his salt, he whom only last year the great war lord had shaken by the hand and called brother?

And so the Subahdar-major paced up and down the small verandah of his quarter, as many a man so placed has done before; and above, the two sahibs listened with apprehension to the rise and fall of the tired cadence on the metalled road, that now rose clearer across the ford—"Three ha'pence and tuppence, three ha'pence and tuppence." Outside the fort gate the two pipers of the corps were playing the sun down behind the great snow-peak to the west, to an air learned from a Highland regiment at Peshawur. In the barracks the men were all wondering what Allahdad Khan thought of this disturbing cry of *Jihad*. With a last wild skirl the "Barren Rocks" on the pipes gave way to the Afghan *dole* and *surnai* (drum and chaunter); and the march of the corps, the well-known lawless Kabul love-song of "*Zakhmi dil*,"¹ lilted over the fort to the upper ramparts and the officers' quarters, and a weary horseman dropped from his horse at the gateway and demanded the sahib. Something had happened, that was evident to the men loiter-

¹ "The Bleeding Heart."

ing in the square; but the newcomer was a Sikh, and therefore sworn enemy of all frontier Muhammadans, despite the bond of the British, and silently and stiffly followed the non-commissioned officer of the guard to the keep, handing a draggled note to Major Allard, who commanded. "Sahib," said he, stolid though weary, "there has been a big fight, and many sahibs are killed."

"Talk to him, Caunter, while I read," said Allard to his companion. And the note read as follows:—

DEAR ALLARD,—We were attacked while halted at midday to-day, at a Zilli Khel village, by several hundred tribesmen, after the political agent had held a *jirga*¹ of local chiefs. Bourne and Brownrigg and Jones the doctor have been killed, and poor Ellis is wounded and left out. I am too badly hit to ride or walk. We have lost one gun, and fired away nearly all our ammunition. A lot of men have been killed. About half the party are here with me. We have got back about four miles, and are too done to go any farther, and are entrenching this village. We can't get any farther without help and ammunition. Subahdar Sher Singh commands, as I can't. The men are behaving splendidly.—Yours,

A. E. CAMPBELL.

Pai Khel village. 5 P.M.

"Read that," said Allard to Caunter, turning to the Sikh. "How far off is the sahib?"

"Eleven miles," said the man. "At Pai Khel

¹ Tribal assembly.

village they have water, but very little ammunition. I rode Campbell sahib's pony."

Men who live on the border marches don't take long to make up their minds, and the north-west frontier of India is as good a school for the rough-and-tumble form of soldiering as is to be found in this empire of ours. Three minutes sufficed for Allard.

"Caunter, we must start at once. Your two guns will come, and as many men as I can get together. Subahdar-major," shouted he to the yard below, "come up here at once, please." There was a rasp in his voice that brought that dreaming old soldier to his bearings at once.

"Sahib," replied he; and came up the steps two at a time.

"Allahdad Khan, there is trouble beyond Kundar. The Zilli Khel have 'chappaoed'¹ Major Brownrigg's force, and many have been killed. I shall start in two hours' time to bring in the remnant, who are with Campbell sahib at Pai Khel. How many men are now in the post?"

"Five hundred and twenty, sahib, and fifty troopers."

"Very well, I will take four hundred rifles and forty sabres. Subahdar Shera Khan will command the post in my absence. We take two

¹ Ambushed.

days' rations, one hundred rounds a man, and twenty boxes of ammunition. The doctor babu must come with two panniers. Thirty-five troopers are to go off at once and occupy the Tangdarra Pass till we come up." The old man repeated his orders, saluted, and swung down the steps, mullahs and *Jihads* safely stowed away at the back of his busy brain for the time being. "Now, Caunter, come and get some grub." And the two sat down to a meal that would be their last for many hours.

Allard was too old a soldier to get on the telegraph line till his nerves had settled, though there was an office in the room below him; and the meal, and Caunter's version of the trouble as obtained from the Sikh, gave him time to view matters in their proper proportion.

"Campbell seems all right till we get there," said he. "I won't push on to Pai Khel till daylight unless we hear firing. We can hang up at that open *kach* by Spinwam, two miles this side of it, and send a couple of Afridis to try and get through. Strikes me the whole of this flaming frontier is going pop. Allahdad Khan has been a bit queer for the last week, but the prospect of a row has brightened him up. We shall get to Spinwam by three or four o'clock with luck. These noblemen round here will hardly be up yet, and they know the brigade from

Asni can be here in a couple of days. If there is a *Jihad* the fat will be in the fire; but it's all in the day's pay, Caunter, old bird."

He did not add, what he knew full well, that if there was a *Jihad* half and more of his own men would desert; that also was included in the pay. Besides, who cares to speak of his lady's shame? And Allard held his corps in very high esteem, for all its faults.

Major James Allard, who had now commanded the Kundar militia for close on five years, was one of the very best type of officers that the old frontier force, that premier school of rough-and-ready soldiers, had turned out. Tall and spare, with close-cropped reddish hair and closely trimmed moustache, a grey eye and a weather-beaten face, he looked what he was, a straight-dealing, resourceful soldier, of perhaps thirty-five years of age. There are plenty such who serve in India from father to son, father to son, doing work that money cannot buy, and each generation poorer in their country's service than the one before; but they never fail in the hour of need.

"Caunter, old bird," was a senior subaltern of Mountain Artillery, that branch of the Royal Regiment whose work begins where that of the Field Artillery ends, at the foot of jagged ridge and knife-edge spur. His chief characteristics

were his love for his equipment and the selected mules that carried it, and his skill with a Castle Connell rod in any waters, and more especially those of the Kunder. The prospect of loosing off his pug pieces at the bad men pleased him exceedingly, and his keen face wore an expression of some content as, after a hurried meal, he went off to see that all was ready in his mud-floored gun-park.

Allard followed him to indite a telegram to the nearest military commander, the brigadier at Asni, six-and-thirty miles down the Kunder, repeating it to the chief civil authority, under whom he, as a militiaman, actually was. It ran as follows:—

Brownriggs' escort with Ellis at Muhammad Kot, in Zilli Khel country, treacherously attacked at a *jirga* (*stop*). Most officers killed; Campbell with remnant have escaped to Pai Khel, eleven miles from here (*stop*). I am going out at once with forty sowars four hundred rifles and two guns (*stop*). Anticipate no difficulty in bringing them in (*stop*). The Ubar Khel round here seem quiet; suggest movable column coming here at once. Addressed G.O.C. Asni; repeated Commissioner.

"That will stir them up without starting a panic," quoth he, and busied himself with getting out maps and preparing his personal equipment, finally going to the lines to see if all was in train to turn out.

The time he had allowed would barely suffice

for preparation and the evening meal, and, as he knew, would leave little opportunity for discussing the news. Action of some kind was imperative, and the Afridi companies he had already discovered to be restless. Fortunately Allard was a shrewd observer, and a man of sympathy besides. The religious side of Allahdad Khan's character he had understood and appreciated, and had also realised that there must be some trouble in the old man's head. That was why he had decided to take him rather than leave him in the important charge of the attenuated garrison of Sinjabi. As for Allahdad himself, the thin lips had relapsed from their grip; and now he was much concerned with issuing orders, so that the noise of the drum ecclesiastic was drowned for the time. Action is always a sound stimulant.

On the narrow parade-ground at 10 P.M. the militia companies were rapidly forming as Allard stepped out of the gate, while the regular artillery were filing out of the horn-work, in the light of the waning moon. In ten minutes' time Allahdad Khan reported all ready, and, in less than two hours from the arrival of the bad news, four hundred rifles and two mountain guns had responded to the demand for help, as the policeman answers to the whistle.

As he gave the order to march, a "clear-the-

line" telegram was put into his hand from the brigadier-general at Asni: "Good luck; have full confidence in you; movable column will reach Sinjabi to-morrow night." It is well to receive hearty support, and as Allard showed Caunter the message he said, "Good old boy, the General; does not stick his toes in."

Down from the post swung the party along the graded zigzag to the river below and the thin mist rising in the bright moonlight, silent but for the jink of the mountain-gun mules, with rifle-barrels glinting, to disappear in the dark shadow by the ford.

After crossing the ford the party settled down into a steady, silent tramp, no advanced-guard but a half company in single file, then a half company in file, and then the main body all in close touch, with no chance of losing connection, and no vulnerable head. Thirty troopers had slipped on ahead an hour earlier to hold a narrow gorge through which the column must pass, and so long as no bad news came from them there was not much to fear.

The little force tramped on steadily past rice-field and rocky stream bed and tribal tower, past the old Græco-Bactrian post and town that Basileus Menandros had failed to hold against just such tribes as the Zilli Khel of other days, with an unchanging thresh and swish. Allahdad

Khan had dropped back half-way down the column, and, away from Allard's influence and whispered conversation, the echo of the drum had once more forced its way from the back to the front of his brain. As the troops had been turning out, and the news of the trouble had passed round, one man, a Eusufzai, had shouted "Din! Din! Fatteh Muhammad!"¹ and had been seized by the throat by the Subahdar-major, and half throttled, half cuffed into silence. Whatever his own feelings might be, Allahdad Khan would allow no one to lead him—and he had not made up his mind. But the disciplined tramp of the men, Allard's quiet and confident air, the jink and stamp of the highly trained artillery, had all appealed to the old soldier's instinct of discipline and memory of war. As he stepped out to the swing of his men and brooded, he made high resolve that his religious feelings should not bring the corps he had helped to shape so well to shame and disgrace in the eyes of the masters. He would slip away himself, and die a martyr's death for the faith if need be, . . . and yet what better faith for a soldier than to follow blind the cause of a race that produced such men as Allard sahib, and Barton sahib his old colonel in Christie's Horse; or Lurard sahib his adjutant, who had ridden beside him in the charge

¹ "The true faith, and victory to Muhammad."

down the Chardeh Valley? And then the drum rolled again, and he thought of the moulvi's letter, "If the salt has lost its savour," and of all the true Moslims who had asked his advice. Should he lead the whole militia to glory and Paradise—"Glory for all, and Heaven for him who bleeds"—and advise all Mussulman soldiers to do the same? "There is no God but God, and Muhammad is His Prophet," and a young sahib in a kilted regiment at Peshawur had called him a dog on the railway platform only the other day! Had the salt lost its savour?

"*Subahdar-major sahib! ohe Khan Jee! Major sahib ap ko bulate hain!*"¹ came down the ranks. Allard had noticed that the old man had left him, and he particularly did not want him left alone. A man whose chief companions in life were a scatter-gun, a spaniel bitch, and a foul bubbly pipe, he had wandered much alone, while peering at mankind from under his deep-set eyebrows; and, as has been said, he had some shrewd inkling of what might be the trouble in his old comrade's head. So he had passed the word down the column for him; and the old man scrambled on his horse and jogged up to the front, to be engaged in constant talk that distracted his attention all night, carefully calculated to that end.

Six miles from Sinjabi they came to the *Gât* of

¹ "The major is calling you."

Kairu, where two troopers sprang up from the silent shadow of overhanging rock to say that all was well and the defile secured, while three wayfarers had been stopped pending the *Huzur's* orders. Through the pass, the force halted, to close up and rest a moment.

It was now one o'clock in the morning, and the waning moon stood high overhead; yet in the clear crisp air the stars shone bright, and Antares flickered red in Scorpio in sympathy with the red scene of yesterday. Five miles to Spinwam still remained, and then a halt till dawn in that comparatively open space; for it is ill approaching a friendly force at night, especially when that force has had its nerves rudely shaken. It was close on four o'clock, and the false dawn faintly showing, when Allard finally brought his little force to a halt in the *kach* of Spinwam, after swiftly surrounding two tribal loopholed towers that guarded the standing corn. The towers once occupied, the inhabitants secured and piquets posted, the force lay down to doze, as best it could, all save Allard and the Subahdar-major, who paced up and down listening for any sound of firing. Rifle shots echo far in the small hours.

At the first fair glimmer of dawn Allard roused his men. Pai Khel was a mile and a half on, three-quarters through open fields, closing in to

a gorge where the stream had cut a conglomerate range for a quarter of a mile, and again out into the open *kach* in which stood Pai Khel. The fanatic Ghazi likes to die, if die he must, with the rising sun in his eyes, and an attack on the remnant in that village might take place at any moment. So the whole force advanced at a jog-trot, and as they emerged from the gorge a shot rang out, followed by a ragged volley.

"Timed it nicely," muttered Allard, as they instinctively came to a halt, while the village of Pai Khel could be clearly seen vomiting flashes from every corner, to answering flashes from the rock and scrub around. Suddenly from a hollow a couple of hundred yards off the village, a knot of some fifty swordsmen advanced on the village at a run. Not much time for thinking. "Cut those Ghazis off with the cavalry, Allahdad; get to the right of them, while I clear the nullah bank!"

So intent were the tribesmen on mopping up the remnant that had escaped them yesterday that Allard's arrival had not been noticed. Allard himself, leading two companies at a double, had made for the left nullah bank and gained cover. Caunter, escorted by two companies, had got his guns on to a small kopje eight hundred yards from the village, and promptly dropped a couple of fleecy shrapnel among the Ghazis, who broke,

to be chased by Allahdad Khan, in whom desire for action now beat fiercer than the drum of religion, his father's sword in his hand, and his men in open order at his heels.

As soon as Allard had seen the red flash of Caunter's guns he led his men from the cover he had taken, at a run, against the hostile riflemen lining the river bank opposite the village. As they topped the rise that hid them from view, he had shouted to his piper, "Skirl, you devil, skirl like blazes!" and the pipes and *surnai* shrieked, and the drummer banged the drum military, and with yells of delight the militia advanced at the double against the enemy, who fled without waiting for impact. Broken at the surprise, many fell from the steady file-firing that ensued, and as they made for the spurs of the adjacent hills Caunter's shrapnel spattered among them.

From Pai Khel across the river bed rose a feeble cheer, and as it came down on the wind the big snow-peak of Ekbai caught glint of the rising sun in answer, and the dying Ghazi had his wish, his last moment spoilt, however, by the growing strength of the cheer. To change from the set teeth of the last ditch to the joy and shout of victory is a revulsion that few can experience, and to those that have there is no sensation left worth feeling. To the men of the relieving

militia the satisfaction at being on the winning side had stifled for the time the religious feeling, and relievers and relieved fraternised heartily.

It is ill catching tribesmen on the run in their own hills, and the remnant of Ghazis and the bulk of the riflemen had got beyond the reach of the sabre. So the militia amused themselves with fancy firing at the disappearing specks, and the piper strutted in front of the village blowing "Hey, Johnnie Cope" for all he was worth, without a thought of the meaning, though he thoroughly understood the humour of the situation. And all the while from the kopje Caunter's shrapnel roared and hummed to the spurs and gullies up which the bad men tried to efface themselves. The effect may have been little, but it added tone to the victory, which had at present cost but seven men wounded, so vast is the difference between attacking and being attacked, especially east of Suez.

And now Allard found time to go to the village, to find poor Campbell in his dooly and see the remnant. And a sturdy remnant he found them too, despite their heavy losses, Sikh and Dogra and Afridi, all of the Third Panjab Infantry, and the one saved gun. The story was a pitiful tale of treachery and over-confidence, with some considerable want of proper precaution on the part

of the officer in command, whose life had paid in part for his error. It is always pardonable to be defeated, but never to be surprised.

Three miles up the valley from Pai Khel it had happened, some eighteen hours before, and though several of the wounded had been brought in by the remnant, alas! some few must have remained out, and all the dead. The doctor had been the first killed; and poor Bourne, commanding the guns, had been twice hit, and his native farrier had held the ends of a severed artery while he fought his guns with case and inverted shrapnel, till the farrier too was badly hit, when Bourne, as loss of blood wore him out, ordered his guns back. . . . A fine tale, my masters, as many will remember. One gun had lain where its mule had fallen, but the wheels and carriage had been brought in. Then, after the first wild hurly-burly and the fall of most of the officers, the remnant had shaken themselves together under a Dogra Subahdar of the staunch old Third Panjab Infantry, and had suddenly fallen back, bearing with them Campbell badly wounded and poor Jones's body, for they had but two doolies. They had rallied, and fought from bluff to spur for over three miles, and then, weary but defiant, had pulled up in Pai Khel, the Alisherzai village, having been left alone the last half mile in. A fine tale again, as is still remembered in the

Kundar Valley, a tale of the English who live to make mistakes and die to retrieve, as they ever will, till they do it once too often, "or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher broken at the fountain." But if it is a fine tale of the English, it is a finer one of those they had taught to follow them.

Allard's plan soon crystallised. He had won a victory, and the tribes were shaken for the nonce. Up that valley he would go, horse, foot, and artillery, and bury his dead, and bring in the English bodies and the missing pug of war that had been lost with its dead gun-mule. Perhaps, too, some wounded straggler might be hiding, but there would be no wounded left lying in the open — the swordsmen would have made sure of that. The native hospital assistant had tied up Campbell's wounds, and he and the rest of the wounded would remain at Pai Khel with a company of militia till Allard returned. The rest of the remnant, who pined for vengeance, should come with him as they had petitioned, and off he would go at once now that his men were rested, before the tribal courage should creep back to the tribal finger-tips.

And here Allahdad Khan rode up swearing inordinately, his red sabre hanging from his wrist while he bandaged a cut in his right forearm. The fanatical expression left his face whenever he opened his lips, and now he was nothing

more than a soldier flushed with victory, that wine of finest bouquet. Habit and discipline and tradition, camaraderie and the lust of red blood, have often trampled on more insistent emotions than the still small voice.

Little time was he given for his vein to change, for it was "Up the valley, Allahdad, with your horsemen; Number 1 Company, advanced-guard and piquets. You've done jolly well, old soldier; rattle 'em again." And off rode the old man, and off swung the companies, up the heights the piquets, and over the flat the advanced-guard points.

As Allahdad Khan rode over the flats he passed the corpse of one of the tribesmen, a Snider bullet through the back for his pains, and round his head was a green turban, the sign of those that die for the faith. "Glory for all, and Heaven for those who bleed." Then once again the daddy-mammy roll of that infernal drum came to his mind—"Heaven for those who bleed." But only for a moment, as from somewhere on the heights a rifle bullet whistled shrill past his ear, "All flesh is grass." "God smite your soul to the nethermost hell," swore the affronted sirdar, and the drumming died away from his brain.

The mounted men pushed up the valley at a steady canter, followed by those on foot. A

mile and a half on Allahdad passed the dead body of a Sikh gunner, a short sword in his hand, but stripped and lying on his back horribly mutilated. The sirdar bit his lip. But—a Sikh and an Afghan— Well, well, war is war and race hatred knows no limits, and he rode on. Half a mile on, behind a rough stone wall by a field of buckwheat, three more corpses lay, the last of a fight for life; one Mussulman gunner and two Afridis of the Third Panjab Infantry, stripped too, by Allah, and—horror of horrors!—savagely mutilated as had been the Sikh. But what is sauce for a Sikh is *not* sauce for a Moslim. Moslim may fight with Moslim all the world over, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, as in the law of Moses; but for a true believer to *mutilate* the righteous dead! . . . And the scales fell away once and for all from the eyes of Allahdad Khan the Salt Ranger, and he knew that this war could be no *Jihad*. Men who could act as the Zilli Khel had acted could be but robbers and murderers turning against law and order; and he bitterly thought of the folly he had gone near to committing.

At this moment half a dozen of the enemy, who had been hunted by a flanking patrol from a lurking-place up on the hillside, and had fled down a spur to cross the valley, descended into the open, to which they stood committed, before

they saw the Subahdar-major and his party. "Talk about *Jihads*, eh," muttered he, "you misbegotten sons of burnt fathers;" and, forming line instinctively, the leading troop dashed at the confiding tribesmen. They too had seen the mutilated corpses, and all thought of religious war had left their minds. One old man of strong Jewish features and flowing beard threw away his long sharp knife and begged for quarter, but little he got. "Fie, fie! Greybeards must die!" and die he did, as better men than he the noon previous. Up and down that open *kach* the remaining five Pathans were hunted, squealing before the sabre-point—a tooth for a tooth again,—and three fell to the wounded sword-arm of the Subahdar-major of militia, whilom rissaldar of Christie's Horse. . . . And thus was a hole kicked in the head of the drum ecclesiastic.

Little remains to be told. Those six tribesmen were the last enemy that came within reach of avenging sword or rifle that day. The column soon reached the scene of the main conflict of yesterday.

If you had seen Dewetsdorp heights after the surrender, or the mimosa slopes before Magersfontein kopjes, you would know what the ground looked like. If not, what good to describe it? But it may be remembered that troops were not allowed to see the veldt at Isandlana after that

disaster, and the field was not tidied till many months later.

The poor hacked corpses were hastily buried, and the English *sahibs'* bodies brought home. The treacherous villages were left in flames; and it was seven that night and the dew falling before a weary but contented force returned to Pai Khel, bearing also the lost gun.

Allahdad Khan rode through at once to Sinjabi, with a telegram to the brigadier; and another message too flashed that night the length and breadth of the Panjab, to village and mullah and corps of the line, "From Allahdad Khan, greeting. The *Jihad* is false."

And thus was the war drum of Islam silenced for the time being; and yet it is to be doubted if to this day the British Government knows why the expected trouble fizzled out, or the effect on politics that resulted from the rough-hewing of the tribes on the corpses of their co-religionist. Allard alone had a shrewd idea, but, being a wise man, kept it to himself. Neither his nor his comrade's services were overlooked by Government.

JAN KOMPANI KÉE JAI.¹

"Can that be an old forgotten tomb?
Is it there that the colonel's sleeping?"

To reconstruct is perhaps one of the greatest pleasures of those whom the past interests. It is hard to reconstruct when the circumstances and surroundings are different. It is easy when the climate and surroundings and the seasons are the same. You can reconstruct in Hampton Court and even Kensington Gardens, but it is hard to sit on the knifeboard of a 'bus that will drop you at the Stores and build for yourself the winter's scene as King Charles, whom some call the Martyr, stepped on to the scaffold from the window in Whitehall. In the quiet grounds of Chelsea Hospital, whose atmosphere deadens the hum of London, you may even look for the Duke of York or Arthur Wellesley himself coming round the corridor, but Wapping Old Stairs and the Pirate dock do not lend themselves to an old scene.

¹ "Power and might to John Company." The old cry of the Indian streets.

In India, the East that changes so slowly, and where, off the main line and haunts of the Babu, a thousand years are but as yesterday, it is possible so to reproduce circumstances and atmosphere that the rest is easy. Up on the frontier the Ghilzai comes out of the passes with his ox and his ass and his camel and everything that is his, as the Israelites came out of Egypt; and in the Panjab the villager, maybe the carpenter, puts his wife and infant on to a ragged pony and drives them much as we believe happened in that exodus before the fury of Herod.

Hard by Lahore are the Shalimar Gardens, avenue and terrace and canal and scolloped fountain, where in the still quiet of the evening it is possible to imagine the great Moghuls, Jehangir or Shah Jehan, or the "Light of the Palace" herself sitting on the marble seats among the fountains. The same soft wind in the trees and the same green parrots on the summer houses. Even Tommy Moore himself could see it, though he had never been there, and wrote of the sister Shalimar in the Kashmir valley, built for the same Moghul. Under the trees in the inner garden the Light of the Palace and her girls, bought in the Samarkand slave-markets, raped from the sack of Rajput cities, or stolen from Kashmir; in the outer gardens Persian and Tartar nobles awaiting audience; without, all

the swordsmen of the East that ride in the train of a ruling power. It is all to be seen and felt without effort, because no advertisements of Blue and Mustard spoil the connection.

In the soft breezes among the fountains one looks for "The pale fair hand beside the Shalimar," and can picture wholly the romance.

Now and again, too, you may get in its full intensity the atmosphere of the Mutiny, and all its weird associations, so inexpressibly dreary to many who went through that eventful year, so romantic to those who can feel the history of the British in the East. Nowhere does this feeling perhaps strike one more than in Lahore Cantonment in the earlier stages of the hot weather. The hot haze and the pea-soup glare have settled on the land, and the army is resting from its labours, only concerned with how to gasp through the next five months, the very time taken to test the Huzoors to the utmost, half a century ago.

It was in the middle of May of a recent summer that I had thrown myself in a long chair in the Artillery Mess at Mian Mir, just as I had marched back from church parade, tired and dusty, for though barely nine the sun was shining as if it were past high twelve. The church parade had been as they have been every Sunday for the last hundred years in the East. The troops in

their white uniforms, the punkahs slowly swinging, and the dust whirling in little devils outside. As they had filed in, a man had fallen from heat-stroke, his rifle clattering on the flags, and his comrades had filed on unconcerned, a true image of the imperturbable garrison that rings the world and hardly changes, the men of Minden and those from Mohmand. The brief service had finished, there had been one Psalm, "By the Waters of Babylon," and all the congregation had looked wistful, and to the "Old Hundredth" and the National Anthem the troops had filed away, past the cholera monument, and the pink oleanders, and the dusty tamarisks, to sleep out the day as best they could, for already the outer air burnt like the breath of a smelting fire. None but the rarest energy can exert itself in a Panjab May and June without some moral stimulus that is lacking in the daily routine. The fining pot for silver and the furnace for gold; and gold it is that retains its energy without unusual stimulant.

Away to their barracks that Sir Charles Napier designed in bygone years had tramped my artillerymen, and into the mess for breakfast had turned I. Who knows where the dust was born?—it pirouetted down the road widdershins, and the mess was cool and restful. The Artillery Mess at Mian Mir is one famous in history.

The site of the Duchess of Richmond's ball no man knows with certainty, but here in Mian Mir, which men now call Lahore Cantonment, was a ballroom of undoubted historic past. On May 10, 1857, the great Mutiny had blazed out prematurely at Meerut, and the famous broken message from the signaller at Delhi had filtered through to the Panjab. Here and there had men realised what it was to mean, but the majority had but turned as it were in their sleep. Fortunately for the Panjab, there were at its capital men of action, Robert Montgomery, the Commissioner, and Stuart Corbett, the Brigadier. All the 12th, however, they had been in conclave, and late in the afternoon had only decided on the trivial measure of taking the percussion-caps away from the native troops. As the Brigadier had driven back through the five glaring miles that separate the city and its cantonment, strength and determination had descended on him. Close on forty years had he served the Company and kept his youth more than had most in those days. He hardened his heart and he whistled an air as he stepped from his carriage, and then and there sent word to the good Montgomery that he would go the "whole hog," and take away not only the percussion-caps but the arms of the native troops in garrison. Montgomery had warmly approved, and all was

secretly in train. Late that evening orders had gone out for a general parade the next morning at five, and with one accord the army had fallen to and grouched, because that very night there was to be a ball at the Artillery mess-house as a farewell to the 81st Foot, who were leaving. There had been a thunderstorm, and to the eager the night promised to admit of dancing. Now every subaltern had a fine grouse, a very fine grouse had he. "Blankety, blankety, blank!" said the major, "fancy, what thoughtlessness! a general parade after a dance, what was the service coming to? What did a proclamation from the Governor-General matter? that could wait. What did trouble among a lot of slack regiments at Meerut matter?" and so on and so forth, after the manner of the English when something pleases them not. And at ten that evening the mess-house was full and a blaze of uniform, and there were chairs and lanterns and carpets in the garden, and the dancers danced and chattered till far into the morning. And the Brigadier danced, too, like the stout heart he was, with his thoughts on the powder mine, and parried his partners who talked of the rumours from Meerut, and who felt "vastly alarmed," as well they might, poor dears, till the last extra died away, and men saw their ladies home and changed their coats and buckled

on their swords to hurry to this senseless parade at the break of day. A secret soon enough ceases to be such, but perforce the officers commanding the 81st and the Bengal Horse Artillery had been warned. The Brigadier, in his knowledge of the feelings of the Sepoy officer for his corps, and of his wonderful wholly praiseworthy yet lamentable belief in his men, had decided to say nothing to the commandants of the native regiments till the last moment. In this, too, he had shown some wisdom in that a most chance remark by them might have let out what was forward.

Shortly after five A.M. the Brigadier rode on to the ground to find his troops in waiting, drawn up on the Maidan facing what is now the railway station. Save Mr Montgomery and a small following in the distance, there were no spectators. The dance had kept the ladies fast in bed. The troops were drawn up in line of columns, the 81st Foot and two weak troops of Horse Artillery on the right, then the 16th Grenadiers, one of General Nott's "beautiful regiments," the 26th Light Infantry, a corps that had done well under Pollock and been made Light Infantry by Lord Ellenborough, the 49th Native Infantry, and on the left the 8th Cavalry. Earlier in the morning a company of the 81st had been hurried off in native pony-carts down the

main turnpike to Amritsar, seven-and-twenty miles away, to secure the fortress of Govindgarh, that the Sikhs had built to the plans of a French engineer, and which was garrisoned by native troops. Three companies, too, of the 81st Queen's were marching at the same time, as fast as the hot night would let them, to take over the Lahore fort and palace from the wing of the 26th Native Infantry that was holding it.

On the parade-ground at Mian Mir the remnant of the 81st and the European Artillery did not exceed 250 souls, and the white faces seemed lost in the sea of brown. Nothing daunted, however, the Brigadier began proceedings. At the head of each regiment was read the Governor-General's proclamation directing the disbandment of the mutinous 34th at Barrackpur. This was the regiment from which one Mangal Pandé, a Brahim of the Brahmins, had shot the adjutant some weeks before the Meerut outbreak, and the whole of his regimental quarterguard had looked on while he did it, and allowed him to call on his corps to rise. It may also be remembered how Sir John Bennet Hearsey, long known as the hero of Seetabuldie, and then an old man, who was commanding the Division, had come across the scene with his two sons in his evening ride. Seeing open mutiny stalking undaunted while the world wavered, he had ridden straight

at the madman saying "Damn his musket" when they warned him it was loaded, whereon Mangal Pandé shot himself and was hanged later for his pains, as also the native officer of the guard. The resulting inquiry had ended in the disbandment of the tainted regiment for which the order was now being read aloud. When the proclamation had ended, a movement was ordered that seemed but part of the day's manoeuvres. The various troops wheeled and re-wheeled till as the new alignment was complete it had come about that the native troops faced the 81st as part of three sides of a hollow square, and behind the 81st the guns were formed. Then the adjutant of the 26th, Lieutenant Mocatta, stepped forward and read in the vernacular a brief order to the effect that, when so many regiments had been led into trouble, it was considered wiser that such distinguished regiments as those at Mian Mir should be placed beyond temptation by the deposit of their arms. Orders were immediately given to "Pile Arms," and at the same moment the 81st fell back to reveal a long line of guns in action with the port-fires burning in the gunners' hands. And as the 81st fell back, the voice of their Colonel, Renny, was heard, "81st, Load!" The Sepoys hesitated for a minute, but they at once realised that the balance of argument lay with the guns. Sullenly but quietly

they piled their arms and the cavalry unbuckled their sabres, and then falling back into their ranks were marched off to the lines, while the 81st collected their arms in carts that were waiting for the purpose. Away at the fort on the far side of Lahore the wing of the 26th had also given up their arms, and later in the day came the news that the company of the 81st and a small number of European artillery had secured the great fortress at Amritsar in the heart of the Sikh community. It was with full and thankful hearts that Brigadier Corbett and Mr Montgomery rode home from as good a day's work as had ever been done in the East. At the great capital of the Sikhs, full of the disbanded soldiery and the disappointed placemen of the Khalsa, the English had shown such vigour that the whole countryside wondered and applauded, and the whole Panjab stiffened. The great central cantonment with its large force of Hindustani troops was now safe for the moment at any rate, and there was a standing example of the merits of decision. How the disarmed troops remained quietly at their duties till one of them, the 26th, obtaining arms by stealth from the hidden armouries of the city, rose two months later to murder their specially beloved commandant and then bolt for Hindustan, or perhaps the magnet at Delhi, is another story. They were

annihilated within a few hours by local levies. Incidentally it may be remarked that it was observed by those who watched the play of the sidelights that no regiment seemed bent on mutiny as a mass. When the hour of dissolution came, the ringleaders almost invariably arranged for the best beloved officers to be first murdered. In every regiment certain officers hold the whole corps in the palms of their hands. Their voice would almost to a certainty keep the sheep within the fold. Therefore it usually happened that they were the first to fall, which accounts for the apparent anomaly of the prompt murder of popular officers, and which shows too that the men who were handling that stricken crowd of wind-driven soldiery knew something of their business.

It was thus, then, that the morn of May 13, 1857, had dawned after the ball in the very mess-house I was now sitting in, and for that dance perhaps the trophies of Sikh arms on the walls were first erected. There was the same rhythm in the sweep of the punkah, the same musical drowsy drone from the Persian wheel at the well, and the same call of the brain-fever bird in the tamarisk in the garden. Idly I turned to the writing-table in the anteroom, the inkstand even ministering to my mood, for it bore the inscription, "Presented to the Artillery Officers of the Lahore Division by Major Warner, IVth Troop

of Horse Artillery." Pre-Mutiny again, a relic of the Bengal Horse Artillery, whose inheritors we were. On the table were some old books carelessly left lying from the library in the next room. One was a copy of Lady Sale's Journal of the captivity in Afghanistan, a popular enough book in its day, reminding us that in the 'Forties the overweening British had taken ladies and babies and nurses and pianos over the passes to Kabul, and opened a cantonment with bandstand and sky-races in the heart of Afghanistan. I took it up and from its pages fluttered an old letter, faded and yellow, and written in that prim pointed hand which was almost universal among ladies of the generation that is gone. It was a simple enough letter, written or half-written to a lady elsewhere, but it supplied just that small particle of colour that was needed to stir the dry bones of Kaye and Malleeson. And this was how it ran:—

DEAREST MERVINIA,—We are very anxious to hear what has happened to you at Ferozepore since the dreadful news from Meerut; and I must tell you of all that has happened here. All the Sepoys have been disarmed by the Brigadier, and some of the officers are wild about it. It happened yesterday. There was a dance on the Wednesday night, given by the station to the 81st, who are marching to Dagshai. The Artillery lent us their mess-house, for they have the only decent floor. There had been a thunderstorm and it was quite cool. I wore my blue dress—the one that you always

admire, and Jessie had on her white muslin ; and Mrs Thackeray chaperoned us, for Mother was not well. It was a lovely dance, dear Mer, though the gentlemen all came grumbling because the Brigadier had ordered a parade for the next morning. However, that did not matter, for Jessie and I had all our best partners, and we did not sit out once. I do like men with whiskers ! don't you ? Of course, no one knew what was going to happen. We all thought the parade was to hear Lord Canning's proclamation read, disbanding that 34th Native Infantry, the one that let that horrid Mangal Pandey shoot its Adjutant. I heard all about that from Mary Hearsey. I was staying with her at Sialkot last Christmas. Her father, you know, rode the man down. "*Le beau général anglais*" they called him in Paris when they were coming out overland. Such a fine old gentleman, dear. All your favourite partners were there, except poor Archie Calvert, whose brother in the 3rd Light Cavalry was killed at Meerut on the 11th. They all danced with me, but no one danced so well as your friend Alfred Light, in the Artillery ; you remember him at Meerut last year. I wonder if he is safe. He was in Major Tombs' troop, and wrote those verses I liked so much in my album. Mr Marley, in the Grenadiers, asked particularly after you, and said you danced vastly well. He would sit out with that horrid Mrs O'Gorman who used to simper "The Captain with his whiskers" at the General's drums last year. I stayed till the end, and the officers escorted us all home. We ladies were surprised to find a piquet of the artillery on the Mall outside, and as we passed the church we saw a half company of the 81st dozing in their cloaks on the grass. The Brigadier, who is an old dear and my special friend, said to me, "Don't get up early after your late dance" ; but Captain Denne, the adjutant of the Artillery, who often takes me riding, and who says I understand more about things than any woman he knows, said to me, "Get up at five and have your horse saddled, and come to the edge of your compound ; you can see the parade from there." And then he said again, "Be

sure and have your horse saddled." I thought it all funny, but Captain Denne's quiet way always makes one do what he says, and so, as it was four o'clock when I got to my room and quite cool, I just got into my white habit, and lay down in a long chair till I was woken up by the rumble of the guns moving up to the parade-ground. It looked just an ordinary parade, and I saw Mr Montgomery on that grey Arab of his in the distance. Suddenly I saw all the guns unhooked and all the Sepoys putting their arms on the ground. Then Captain Olpherts' troop suddenly limbered up and galloped forward and came into action right among the heaps of arms, and I could see the gunners ramming home their shot. In a few minutes the native Sepoys marched off, and presently the 26th passed down the road without their muskets, and two or three of the British officers had no swords either. Major Spencer, at their head, looked so sad and yet so fierce, but he had his sword. . . .

And here the old letter broke off. I had heard of D. Olpherts taking his guns forward at the gallop in among the piles of arms. An old station-master at Lucknow had told me of it, and how it was not ordered but he did it on his own, because the Grenadiers were murmuring as they re-formed. The station-master had been his trumpeter. You won't find the story in any history. D. Olpherts was brother to William, "Hell-fire Jack," a familiar figure at the "Senior" till a few years ago, when he too followed the great army of John Company. The letter had evidently never gone to "dearest Mer" at Ferozepore, and had lain for fifty years and more in

Lady Sale's story. Someone had been pulling out the old books in the library, and half a dozen more lay on the table—most of them about India and with "Smith & Elder" on the title-page. 'The Life of Colonel James Skinner,' 'The Chaplain's Narrative of the Siege of Delhi,' 'How I Escaped from the Great Revolt,' and the like. Some too of the earlier period, narratives of the Sikh wars and the Gwalior Campaign; one had "Presented to the Artillery Book-Club, Lahore Division," and then again the name "D. Olpherts, Artillery," on the fly-leaf.

Then outside a voice behind the *jillmills* said, "*Olpherts sahib ka ghora tayar hai*,"¹ and so I got up and put on my brass helmet with its horse-hair plume, heavy but not hot, for the shiny brass breaks up the sun's rays, and mounted. The troop must have moved off, for I could see the last gun going down the road with the two gun-buckets swinging under the axle. That infernal bearer of mine must have let me sleep again after bringing my tea, for I dressed the moment I got home from the dance. However, I got up on the Arab and cantered after the troop, and we swung on to the parade-ground at a trot, after being blocked by the Grenadiers, who were across the road in column of route. Denne and Warner came up just then. Warner said,

¹ "Olpherts sahib's horse is ready."

"You had better load with case, Johnnie, and I'll try shot; it's a better egg than shrapnel if they break." . . . "Master's breakfast long time ready."

. . . Heavens, where was I? . . . and the brass helmet changed to a white one, and I saw breakfast on the table. The same old mess, and with poor Neisham's carbine on the mantelpiece, a Free State one, that he always carried, and had had on him when killed fighting two guns of the 38th battery at Tweefontein where Lord Methuen and the guns were taken by Delarey. Same old mess, same old artillery, new guns but not new men, for the mould is a set one. Same old hot weather, same dust storm, and same hot weather bird, and perhaps the same cloud on the horizon, for some say the English, like the Bourbons, forget nothing and learn nothing, and others that the prow is still of beaten steel. Be that as it may, the Mian Mir Artillery Mess-house in early May will lead you straight to the old trail, less happily, the Wandering Jew with his cholera track behind him.

THE PASSING OF A REPUBLIC.

"War should be fought by men without wives ;
Bangles ring softly and sadly."—*Panjab Lyric.*

OF all the pageantry and ceremony that yet remains to us from days gone by, there is perhaps no scene so tragic, or so pathetic in its appeal to the spectator, as a soldier's funeral, be it that of a great general or of a humble private. The poor corpse on its gun-carriage or tumbril, with the Union flag as pall, and head-dress, decorations, and sword atop, the saddled charger, with empty boots reversed in the stirrups, the slow tramp of the private's squad or the general's brigade,—are they not graven deep on the memory of many a mother and widow, ever a vision to check Nature's kindly attempts at oblivion!

The Dead March with its muffled drums, the wailing dirge on the pipes, the shrill fifes in the "Adeste Fideles," the sharp volleys over the open grave, the tense, straining silence that follows, . . . only broken by the merry quickstep

that lifts the escort home, are sad memories for the mourner and the comrade. Yet the brisk note thus struck is the right one—the fight well fought, and the soldier at rest, as the cheery quickstep from the grave side bids the dead bury the dead, and no man, least of all a soldier, grieve at the common lot.

In war there is often little enough of pomp and circumstance that can attend the soldier's burial, and so wonderful a thing is custom to the human mind, that hardly are the dead buried in cloak or in blanket than they are forgotten in the hurry and earnest of further action, only to be remembered when peace and leisure supervene.

The following is a story of a hurried burial which, nevertheless, by reason of its chance surroundings, was vignettted with unusual clearness on the memories of those who attended.

Does any one remember the pitiful telegram from Delhi that reached Umballa that horrible morning in May, when paralysis had fallen like a blight on the white troops in Meerut, and the mutinous cavalry had clattered over the bridge of boats into the Imperial City? The unofficial message of the Delhi telegraphist, that was never finished but announced that the mutineers were even then riding up to the office steps? Just such a message, but happily shorn of nearly all the sequel of tragedy, had arrived one morning

in February at a wayside railway station in Cape Colony.

Half a dozen Boer commandoes under Kritzinger, Hertzog, and other kindred spirits, had invaded the Colony in the second year of the struggle, and making war support war, were living on the land, spoiling the loyalist and the coloured folk. Looting the stores, stirring up rebellion, and each a law unto himself, they disappeared at one point to reappear where least expected, miles away, to the utter distraction of the British authorities, who were endeavouring to cope with the invasion and make one column do the work of ten, according to the good old tally of "Duck and green peas for tuppence" which Britain demands from her servants.

One of the numerous columns that had been hastily got together to cope with the raiding commandoes had news of a descent meditated by the brethren on a loyalist town. Hastily pitching itself into such trains as an overtaxed railway system could provide, it was concentrating on the threatened point as best it could. The advantage of interior lines was becoming painfully evident as the train crawled over the construction lines on the circumference, while the commandoes were free to cut across the chord.

As the leading train with many creakings pulled

up at the wayside station referred to, the prudent telegraph operator at the town some twenty miles away from the rail was wiring to the clerk at the railway-station, "Schuipers commando is now entering the town, I am burying the instrument . . ." and here the message broke off. The troops on the train consisted of a weak squadron of well-salted yeomanry, a section of a field howitzer battery, a stray troop of over-sea colonials, and some thirty recruits of a dragoon regiment just out from England to join their corps somewhere in the Northern Transvaal. None of the Column Staff had arrived, the next train was not due for hours; the total available rifles perhaps numbered 150! What was to be done? It was a matter for dispute even as to who was in command, among Regular, Colonial, and Auxiliary officers assembled on the platform. "Let's have a bally republic then," said the gunner, "and shove along." And so a republic was declared then and there, and a triumvirate of seniors decided to rattle the guns and every mounted man along the cart-track to the township the moment they were out of the train.

The heavy howitzers were slung out of the trucks by willing hands, the teams had travelled in their harness; the horses of the mounted men were leapt from the cattle trucks on to the bare rails without waiting for them to be brought

alongside the short platform; and within half an hour of the arrival of the broken telegram the "bally republic" was marching to the rescue. A wire was despatched to the column commander apprising him of the situation, and that he had best follow with all despatch and pick them out. Triumvirates are no respecters of persons, and as some ribald member said of the message, "That ought to ginger them."

To cut a long story short, *l'audace, encore l'audace*, as so often happens in war, met with complete success. The heavy guns rolling high the dust on the apology for a turnpike to a horse-artillery pace, had conveyed the impression that a considerable force was approaching. The careful burghers, who never laid the odds, evacuated the town without firing more than a few shots, and, before they had ransacked more than one store, had scampered away to the open veldt.

As the British swept through the little town, which had an intensely loyal coloured or bastard population—to use the term they themselves prefer,—a scene of wild enthusiasm took place. Never had Imperial troops been seen in the country-side before, and coloured maids in bright cotton screamed and ran alongside the guns, waving Union-jacks; English and German store-keepers and their daughters, beside themselves

at the unexpected rescue of their shops, shouted themselves hoarse; and even the Dutch inhabitants joined in the cheering, lest they should be marked as rebels.

The triumvirate pushed their troops through the town and, clear of the laughing maids and waving flags, the advanced guard extended over the veldt on the far side, to clear a safe area for a bivouac. But the screen tumbled on a Boer patrol, the supporting troops tried to gallop it and fell into a carefully conceived ambush, . . . four men were killed and as many wounded in a minute, . . . and it took all the force and a screaming lyddite shell to extricate that party.

It was quite evident that the brethren had not retreated far, and were as ready as ever to sting the unwary, for the Boer is an ill man to chase too closely, always ready to recover his *élan* if given a moment's respite, and prompt to rap again. As the town was saved and night approached, nothing further was possible or desirable than a careful bivouac, and the piquets were posted to the accompaniment of a vicious sniping from the disappointed burghers, who began to suspect that they had been bounced out of the town, by a force inferior in numbers if not in *morale*, and had yielded good beds and good dinners without due cause. The feeling that you've been "done" is just as

aggravating at the game of war as at any other pursuit.

So in revenge there was an inclination to annoy the khaki outposts, and the republican leaders had to post strong piquets and keep their horses well under cover.

In the meanwhile the buried telegraph instruments had been exhumed and got to work, and announced that the main part of the column would arrive after dark, so that the town had been saved, and the adventure had had a satisfactory enough ending, save for the four stout yeoboys from the shires, who, alas! lay needing burial. Since burials are best done quickly, it was decided to bury them then and there, after dark, in the little township cemetery, and all the republic wished to be there, excepting only the piquets, who had other, and extremely tiresome, fish to fry, for the sniping burgher was unusually active and the mauser was "tocking" merrily round the camp.

At eight o'clock that evening, one of those crisp dark nights that give half its charm to the veldt, the burial parties assembled, the yeomanry bringing their dead with them, sewn into their service blankets, while oversea colonials, dragoon recruits, the hard-bitten gunners of the howitzer section, most of them reservists who fought for two, and the heads of the republic, mustered

round the grave that was dug for four. As the *cortége* entered the cemetery, the moon, three-quarter full, rose over the Swartzburg peaks, eclipsing the light of the Southern Cross, and sharply silhouetting the tall blue-gums, threw their shadows over the grave, while in the bright patch by the gate the bastard maids had crowded, as ready to weep now as they had been to cheer earlier in the day.

The sight was a weird and impressive one, as one of the triumvirate stepping forward, commenced the "Three voices," and the muttering crowd grew still. The hard-set, sun-dried faces of the khaki-clad soldiers, fully armed, weary and dishevelled after their long day's travel, the sympathetic English storekeeper, the wondering German trader, drawn by curiosity from his latticed bungalow, the sobbing coloured girls with Union kerchiefs about their heads, all set in a white moonlight mount, with a waving border of jagged blue-gums, must ever remain as vivid memories to those who stood by the grave.

Two lean-ribbed, bobtailed English horses, the sole survivors of the squadron of well-covered troopers that had left merry England scarce ten months before, stood wistful hard by, as chief mourners to the gallant hearts that had cared for them so well. ". . . even so saith the Spirit; for they rest from their labours."

As the abridged impromptu service closed, a stray trumpet-major of the Artillery, serving the republic by some chance, blew out shrill and clear, despite his battered trumpet, the "Last Post," in last tribute to the poor clay. Then, as the final notes died away over the wide, noiseless veldt, a tense, strained silence ensued in the crisp night that seemed never-ending, and so tried poor human nerves that they longed for the crash of the drums and cymbals in the cheery quickstep of the peace-time funeral ending.

One man rose to the occasion, and broke the spell that glued us nerveless to the grave. The officer commanding the oversea colonials rapped out some low order, and then with a sharp "Fours right" they swung away, and burst with one accord as they stepped off into their old lawless prairie chorus, that they sang when the guns stuck in the drift, when the Boer maxim ploughed among them, or when their bivouacs ran deep in rain. Out burst, too, the lawless *finale* to the backwoods refrain, "*What the hell do we care, we care, we care?*" to be taken up by every corps eager to settle its nerves aright, till the tin and wattle streets echoed again, and the stolid Dutch in the town ran to their *stoeps* and said "*Aallemaghtig!* these English are surely mad."

But they were in very sober earnest indeed, and only eager to erase the strain of the past day, and concentrate their thoughts on the future as good soldiers should, lest their courage fail them at the next strain. So it happened that as the commander of the column rode into the township that evening, at the head of the main body, he met the republic swinging back to their bivouac behind their piquets, and singing as they went their expiring song, "What the hell do *we* care, *we* care, *we* care?" at which he marvelled greatly, till the triumvirate came and gave count of their doings.

A CYCLE OF CATHAY.

(1902.)

"Ghore par howdah, hathi par zeen,
Jaldi bagh gia, Warren Hasteen."

—*Old Indian Lullaby.*

As the evening gun flashed and reverberated over the huge durbar camp at Moghul Delhi, studded with twinkling lights and merry camp-fires, I, James Foresight, a simple captain of artillery in general and of a heavy battery in particular, stepped out of the gunner mess-tent into the cool moonlight, loosened my jacket, and, weary of dessert and mess chatter, leant against a howitzer in the battery gun-park.

The spirit of reverie that haunts an Indian evening descended on me, and there in the durbar camp, within a rifle-shot of the Ridge, a thousand thoughts crowded on each other. Of ancient India, of Prince Gautama and Alexander of Macedon, of Timurlang and the mighty Babar, and then of the India of "John Company," down to my own poor wanderings, while the

band from the Viceroy's pavilion sounded clear across the camps, even as the strains of mutineer bands, playing British airs to the imperial puppet, must have reached "the masters" as they clung to that ridge close on half a century ago.

The moonlight glinted from the four long khaki barrels of the heavy guns, and their howitzer satellites, no longer drawn by giant elephants, but confided to the lumbering "twenty yoke of the 40-pounder train."

From time immemorial the heavy guns, called in some shrewd jest the "true politicals" of India, had been drawn by elephants, and only their ammunition-waggon by bullocks; and now, by a recent edict, elephants had been discarded—discarded at any rate till a 40-pounder next jams in the Khyber. So, down by the gun-park I dreamed of the past pomp of my battery, now dimmed by the loss of our famous elephants, and mused on, on the varying phases of a soldier's life in India; of my subaltern service with the mountain artillery, lightest of the dogs of war yet hardly least; of my first sojourn with elephants in Burma, when we hoisted our 7-pounders on their backs to thread the Pinmana jungles. Then on to years spent with the jingling gun-mule all the frontier round, wandering on to stories of Clive and Cornwallis, of Lake and Wellesley, and of the romance of Indian

soldiering, that, descending through Donald Stewart and Roberts, still lingers on the Afghan marches, with

"The flying bullet down the pass,
That whistles shrill, 'All flesh is grass,'"

where my best friend lies, shot through the heart as he breasted a kotal at the head of his battery.

"Salaam, sahib," broke on my dreams, the salute of a muffled figure that had approached from the bullock-lines. It was none other than my old friend Sheikh Bhulloo, for some time jemadar of mahouts in my battery, now chief of the *hathi-khana* (elephant-stable) of Scindiah, in whose retinue he had come with the State elephants to the durbar, and had hastened to greet us the first spare moment he had had. He had been with our artillery elephants at Pinmana, and I had met him again in charge of the beasts carrying commissariat grain-bags to our posts on the Yunan frontier. In those days a bottle of chlorodyne and a tin of Swiss milk had enabled me to cure the old man of what he firmly believed to be cholera, so he was proportionately grateful, and delighted beyond measure at meeting me at Delhi, and finding me the captain of his former heavy battery. He had returned the chlorodyne favour by

curing me of ague in those same frontiers by giving me some of his pet opium pills, and as ague had been threatening me for the last two nights, I felt inclined to ask for a pill now.

"Well, Sheikh Bhulloo, how goes the *hathikana*?"

"By the favour of the Presence, all is well. To-night is old Seevaji's festival; he is the oldest elephant in Hindostan, and has been with Scindiah since the Great Fear; men say he carried Carnwallis sahib, and even the Horrible Istink¹ sahib. Gopi Nath has just repainted his head, and three *chirags* [oil-lamps] burn on his skull-top; will not the Presence come and see him? Shisha Nag, who used to be lead elephant in No. 4 gun in the Huzoor's battery, is with him, and as the prince-born knows, Shisha Nag drew Lord Lake's guns when the Huzoors first came to Delhi; but Seevaji is older than he."

"Of course I'll come and see Seevaji, and old Shisha Nag too; but wait till I get my cloak, for I've had ague these two nights." When I returned with my cape I found the old man examining the new breech-loading howitzers with intense interest: cannon have always fascinated the Asiatic.

"The Presence has ague! he must have *āfeem*"

¹ The Honourable Mr Hastings.

(opium), said Sheikh Bhulloo, and I was at once presented with an opium pill of considerable size.

"It won't hurt the Presence," said the old mahout anxiously, and so, not without a qualm, I swallowed it, and followed him towards Scindiah's camp.

The chiefs' camps lay far through the maze of army camps; past the native cavalry, row after row of hobbled squadrons and forests of lances and pennons; past the horse and field artillery, every gun-muzzle in scrupulous dressing; past the squat vixen screw-guns of the mountain batteries; through street on street of close-packed battalions, British and native; past camp-fires and cheery sing-songs—

"Jolly good song, jolly well sung,
Jolly good comrades every one"—

till we came to the medlied establishments of the Indian chiefs. Slipping past the spreading tents and *shamianas* of the potentates, we came to their cavalry camps and gun-park, differing scarcely at all from a gathering of Moghul feudatories of perhaps a couple of centuries ago, since in the immutable East a century is but a span.

In the *rajwara* gun-park there was little of the sombre order obtaining in the Sirkar's camp a mile or so away. Big guns and little guns, silver

and even gilt, dragon-mouthed and ostentatious, lay in delightful medley. Field-guns that Scotch Sangster had cast at Agra for De Boigne's French-trained contingent a century ago, silver coehorns on rosewood carriages from Indore, rakish swivel-guns, bell-mouthed *zumbooraks*, long-barrelled *sher butchas* from mountain fortresses, every fantastic piece of ordnance that oriental ingenuity could devise, stood cheek by jowl on the nitre flats by the Jumna, while beyond them loomed two huge elephants, and some fifty yards farther on a dozen more. By this time my *āfeem* pill had allayed the incipient chattering of the ague, and was producing a feeling altogether novel,—so much so, that when finally settled on the trail of a huge lumbering bombard, within a dozen yards or so of Seevaji and Shisha Nag, I felt hardly surprised at the weird effect of the lighted *chirags* flickering on the former's crown, or the elaborate painting on his forehead that showed up fitfully as the wicks flared and sank again.

"That's Seevaji, the world-compeller, the mover of mountains," whispered my guide. "See his tusks, mounted with gold; Scindiah had that done when Seevaji charged through his own mutinous troops at the time of the Terror, and enabled him to escape to the British, so that he preserved his honour and his fidelity. Forty-five years ago to-day, and his Highness always gives *bakhsheesh*

to the *hathi-khana* and decorates Seevaji, the *Amir-i-filan* [Prince of elephants], lest he turn on us and kill his mahout: seven mahouts has he killed in my memory, Huzoor, and what he has seen and what he knows no man can tell. See the garlands of roses the Maharajah sent him this morning; he will only wear them if his temper is good."

Weird indeed, wise and unearthly certainly, loomed that mountain of flesh and bone, the wrinkles in brow and trunk forming a rugged silhouette in the full fragrant moonlight that the white nitre efflorescence on the ground reflected with the brilliance of an arc-lamp. A couple of yards behind stood my old friend Shisha Nag, the erstwhile leader of No. 4 gun, a contemporary of Gerard Lake, of Delhi and Laswarree,—“Lucky Lake” men called him, for all the hazards he took and won,—an elephant old and venerable to mere human ideas, but a child beside Seevaji, whose close ally he now was.

Both the leviathans were weaving steadily after the manner of their kind from one leg to another—a movement which conveyed the impression of deep reverie and contemplative reflection, and which would go on solemnly for hours at a stretch.

“*Khudawand*, Seevaji will soon begin to talk,” whispered the jemadar mahout. “We never know what he will say, but he tells of battles and

sieges, of suttees and sacrifices, of wholesale bow-stringings in the *bibi ghar*——”

“Come, come, Sheikh Bhulloo, don't talk rot,” I began; but—was it rot? was it so absurd that an animal living to twice, and perhaps thrice, threescore years and ten, with a brain and wisdom more approaching man's than does any other animal's, should acquire in the course of years the thoughts and speech of its owners? Absurd or not, it began to seem to me, leaning against that medieval cannon, that it would be the most natural thing in the world for that elephant, with its ceaseless rhythmic weaving, to reveal some of the impressions that those small and cunning eyes had recorded on its brain, and I continued to gaze expectant on the two leviathans, while the *chirags* flickered and leapt.

I had not long to wait. “Oho, Shisha Nag! oho! What has the Sirkar done with the gun-elephants? Never before have I seen the big English guns drawn by bullocks alone.”

I could not at first discover from which beast the voice came, a hollow voice wavering with age, but it was evidently Seevaji speaking; and he spoke remarkably good Persian, which I understood, though now and again he broke into Mahratti, which was harder to follow.

“The Sirkar prefers bullocks, O Seevaji! Dirty grain-fed bullocks, that sleep all day, and can't

pull the weight when the ghats are muddy; ay, and has bred a new horse too, all hair and bone, thinking they will make the 40-pounders gallop and trot like Lake sahib's galloper guns. To think that I, who shoved General Malcolm sahib's siege-trains through the Vindhya Mountains ere Asirghar had fallen, should live to see it, *Aré bap-ré!*" rumbled from Shisha Nag, our old gun-leader, in less quavering tones.

"Bullocks!" wheezed old Seevaji. "Bullocks! did a bullock ever do aught but die when the work was hard? Ask General Abercrombie about it! I well remember, but it is so long ago that all other elephants are dead, the trouble the English had; I then belonged to Suckojee Rao Endulkar, who commanded a Mahratta *panch-hāzāree*¹ in Scindiah's service: the Rao himself rode me, and my trappings were finer than the great Lord sahib's this day.

"We marched south to help the *Angrez* [English]; Carnwallis sahib, the *Angrez lard*, had beaten Tippu, and those misgotten Mysore *log*, and would have pressed to Seringapatam, but all his bullocks died, died like locusts in the cold, and he had to wait for the Bhow, who was bringing many elephants from Poona. Well I remember the talk about it, and the *Brinjarah*² folk said the *Angrez* over-marched their bullocks;

¹ A corps of 5000 horse.

² A tribe of hereditary carriers.

but we elephants knew better,—we knew that when bullocks draw guns, elephants will sooner or later have to do it for them.

“Abercrombie sahib at that time was marching from Bombay and the Konkan, and his bullocks died too, so we all waited near Bangalore. Why does not the Sirkar find out what *Lard* Carnwallis sahib said about bullocks after that?

“Some English troops from Bombay came with the Bhow. Captain Little sahib commanded; he was a great friend with my Rao, and they would go shooting tigers on my back. Those were fine times, Shisha Nag, fine times; hundreds of banners were carried with the Bhow’s army,—each Mahratta chief had his own. We had 40-pounders in those days also, cast by a Portuguese in the Peishwa’s fort at Poona. I often had to go shove them out of their mud, for their wheels were of solid teak and sank deep.

“The Angrez army was a fine sight too, men called it the Grand army. Carnwallis sahib rode a white Arab, and the flag of the English was carried behind him on an elephant; that was before your time, Shisha Nag. We then marched into the mountains to Nundy Droog—the Bhow and some of the Grand Army—and took it after twenty-two days, and the Bhow’s Rohilla companies killed the *killedar* [governor] and threw half his Arab garrison headlong from the cliffs

of the Droog, 600 feet on the sheer, where they fell on the prickly-pear bushes (and lie there still, for aught I know, to this day), which much pleased *Lard* Carnwallis sahib. I trampled the *killedar* under my feet, and many another, as we went through the gate, which was full of Tippu's dead Arabs. I was not afraid of men's blood in those days, though I can't face a slaughtered goat now.

"In the spring we returned to see *Lard* Carnwallis storm Seringapatam, after which the Rao always feared the English, though why Tippu was not put to death we never could understand, nor why he was allowed to keep his fortress till he again became rebellious, so that General Harris and Arthur Wellesley sahib, *bahadur*, had to kill him six rains later. I was there also.

"Next hot weather we returned to Poona, where Nana Furnavis ruled the Peishwa for the good of the land, and sent us off to fight the Nizam's army, never heeding the British Resident, who forbade it. The Nizam had 14,000 men, but we beat them, and cut the throats of all our prisoners save M. Perron and fourteen *Feringhi* [French] soldiers, who worked the artillery. I drew the Rao's brass 18-pounder that morning, the one with the devil mouth that stands yonder even to-day.

"We captured M. Perron's camp and all his chief's women; there was a Feringhi maid, too, whom the Rao claimed as his share. He carried her off in a howdah on my back that night, though she wept bitterly. The Rao put his arm round her and she bit him till he bled, so that he swore again, but vowed she was fit wife for a reiving Mahratta, and so she was. I took them across the Nerbudda, in full spate from the mango showers, when he sent her west in a litter, and what came of her I never heard: belike she was the mother of the two boys who carried his standards at Kirkee, and were killed by the English artillery; men said their mother was of Europe.

"I saw nine Feringhi gunners who would not leave their cannon brought prisoners to camp that morning and given to the Arab company, who made targets of them, for the Angrez and the Feringhi were of no account in the Deccan in those days. The Rao had already forgotten Carnwallis sahib and his 'Grand Army,' though I remembered well enough." And here old Seeraji grunted disgust at the folly of his dead and gone masters, as well he might, for their tether was to be short enough.

The little lamps on the leviathan's skull flickered and danced to the tales of battle and murder, while I, seated on that devil-mouthed

gun from M. Perron's park, was, strangely un-surprised to hear old-world stories from the wrinkled mammoth. Not so, however, Sheikh Bhulloo, who cowered and prayed to Hindu gods his fathers had long forsworn.

"Sahib, surely he is a *bhūt* [ghost]: much blood has he seen, and knows all the evil that Mahratta and M'lech wrought a hundred years ago—nine full-sized cakes shall he have for breakfast, with best molasses atop—*ohé*, best beloved!"

The *chirags* flared once again with a frosty blue flame, and this living record, weaving through the smoke of the wood-fires, his bead-eyes ever twinkling, continued to croon out his history:—

"After that the Rao marched through the Canara jungles back to Poona, levying a tax of 500 rupees and five maids on every village we passed, and if any man resisted we roasted his legs, so that he denied us nothing. One money-lender there was who swore he had not a penny; he was too fat to roast, so an Afghan captain of horse offered to deal with him. They put centipedes in his ears and nostrils, and plugged them in with cow-dung, and then locked him in a coffer with burrowing stag-beetles. In half an hour he promised two lacs, which so pleased the Rao that he gave the Afghan the banker's two

daughters and 5000 rupees besides, vowing it was a pretty jest. That was how we kept the peasantry in order before the English broke the Mahratta barons and Pindari chiefs, or young Englishmen could ride about the country in their shirt-sleeves giving orders to whom they please.

"When we arrived at Poona, Holkar wanted to put the Rao's *panch-hazaree* under a Feringhi officer; but the Rao refused, and marched west again for his own hand, vowing vengeance against upstart bastard princes, till we came to the Ghauts above Bombay, where we captured the inner and outer forts of Raj-Machee from one Jestwunt Rao, *patel* of Junair, and thence raided cattle and girls from the Konkan for three years more, close to where men tell me the fire-carriage now climbs the Western Ghauts by Khandalla. Once an English force attacked our fort, but we drove them back, the Rao pouring molten lead on the party of soldiers who tried to blow in the outer gate.

"Three white wounded soldiers were left, whom we impaled on the elephant spikes of the big teakwood gates as a warning to let us be. I pressed with my forehead on each till the spikes pierced them, for my mahout urged with the sharp of his *ankus*; for which pain I tore his outcaste head off later.

"Next year we raided down to the rich green Konkan till the Angrez fired at us across the water from the old Portuguese forts on the island of Salsette. There was a Portuguese sahib with us, who cast the Rao's cannon, who danced and swore to see it. Ho-ho, a merry life we lived in Raj-Machee, gradually capturing the hill-forts round—Visaghur with the Jain temple, Torna, Toonga, and Lohoghur, where lay the long gun from the sea, that belonged to the old English queen, with a rose and an English letter cast on its breach.

"When the Peishwa sent to us for tribute we flung his vakil, a Mahratta Brahmin, over the Ramoosie bastion of Torna, 700 feet below to the rocks and the cactus-hedge, that all men might know that the Rao fought for his own hand. His horse took toll of every caravan, and the Salsette fishers sent him three maids a-year, the price of their bamboo villages. At that time there were fifty Arab horsemen in the Rao's service, who had deserted from the Nizam, and who, having waxed proud from much loot and licence, vowed they would ride north and seek new adventures in Khandeish, which they did, taking the Rao's pet 3-pounder gun with them, and four of his own Arab horses, hoping to cross the Mutha before they were missed. But the river was in spate, and the Mahratta

horse from all the Rao's forts caught them at the ford, and brought them back in irons before him, sitting in durbar in the upper fort of Raj-Machee, overlooking the courtyard. With him sat his chief officers drinking sherbet, and as the prisoners were brought in he scowled on them and spat, saying, 'Poke their eyes out, and cast them loose outside the gates,' which was done then and there, while he further ordered their families to be cast lots for among their captors, so that men said the Rao was just and merciful."

Here that horror-proof beast strained at his lashings and scattered dust and hay-stalks on his back with his trunk, while across the camp reverberated the rolling drum and squealing fife, ordering all troops to bed, till shrill and clear through the tents rang the cavalry trumpets sounding the Last Post, dying away and re-echoing amid the mist of the river to the minarets beyond. In the tense crisp silence succeeding the trumpet-call Seevaji recommenced his saga:—

"'Twas about that time, Shisha Nag, that Holkar beat Scindiah and the Peishwa outside Poona, on the Ahmednagar road. The Peishwa fled through the hills to Bassein, and the Rao sent me with two brass guns as a present to Holkar, offering service. Poona was overrun by Holkar's men, and Bapu Furnavis

was skinned alive, till he told ere he died where the Peishwa's silver guns were hidden.

"Much talk there was at this time of driving the English into the sea, and how the Feringhi emperor in Europe would send guns and ships to assist. Scindiah and Holkar were to be friends, and all the Mahrattas would act together, and the English rule would be swept from the land; but I, who had seen the army of Carnwallis sahib, knew better. Before the Mahrattas had thought of moving, up over the Ghauts came Wellesley sahib, *bahadur*, and Stevenson sahib, with guns and English soldiers and lacs of sepoy. They stormed the big fort at Ahmednagar, and we with Scindiah were beaten at Assaye.

"I was captured there by an English regiment that wore slashed red-coats and long white hair. Those Angrez came over the Kaitna ford before we knew they were there, though all our guns spat canister. The red-coats charged our guns as we tried to get them away; two French gunners who tried to hook me to mine were bayoneted, while a tumbril behind me blew up, killing two gun-elephants, and the rest bolted, upsetting our regiment of sepoy that D'Auvergne sahib had trained in the French fashion; but I did not bolt, for I knew the English.

"Wellesley sahib then came up without his

horse, and called to my mahout to make me kneel, which I did, the general and two other officers getting up. He was cursing because his Arab had broken away from his orderly and had galloped after our elephants. One of the English officers held a pistol to my mahout's head, bidding him follow the English dragoons, so I hurried all I could. We stopped by an English sepoy regiment that had ceased firing and begun to carry away its dead and wounded. The colonel came up, and the general hissed something at him, so that he shouted to his men and hit a native officer over the head, when the regiment then doubled after us, and all the Mahratta army fled or was captured.

"So I entered the English service and ate their sugar-cane for many a long year, but shall never forget Wellesley sahib that day, and how the English colonels were afraid of him.

"Back I came to Poona, perhaps twelve years later, when Bajee Rao had forgotten Wellesley sahib. There was a battle at Kirkee, and I helped the English bullocks drag their guns through the Sangam marsh. Bajee Rao fled with the Nana Dundoo Punt, the cowherd's son. They hid in the cave temple near Bamburda, where men say the old priest who urged the Nana to kill the English at Cawnpore still lives to this day. They also say, though I believe it

not, that the English knew he was there but would not take him. Men say, too, the English are changed since those days. *Lard* Carnwallis sahib would not have liked that, even though he did spare Tippu. 'Twas not long ago that three Mahratta Brahmins came to Gwalior, who said that that Bamburda priest was alive, and had planned the murder of the English commissioner who brought the great sickness five years ago; but who knows? for all Mahrattas lie, even as they lied to Arthur Wellesley sahib.

"But who had seen the like of the English in those days, O Shisha Nag? It was soon after that, when they had brought Burman bells from Rangoon to cast more siege-guns, and also twenty-seven Mingoos elephants from Ava to draw them, that *Lard* Combermere *bahadur*, the new war-lard, marched against Bhurtpur with an army as big as Carnwallis sahib's in the old days. All Hindustan believed the English could not take the fortress, since *Lard* Lake failed twenty years before; but I, who had carried Carnwallis sahib and Arthur Wellesley too, knew better.

"Because men told him that I had carried those two Rustums, Combermere sahib must fain ride me also, and close under the Bhurtpur walls we rode, while Colonel Skinner's *rissalah* marched close behind, with all the elephants in the Purab

drawing big guns : perhaps you were there too, Shisha Nag?

“Outside Bhurtpur was the Begum Samru, who had come all the way from Sardhana to help the white English, for the sake of her dead lover, with 500 *gorcheras* [irregular cavalry] and three brass *zumbooraks*. *Lard* Combermere got down from my back to receive her, kissing her before all the army, after the English fashion, as *Lard* Lake had done before him, till the young sahibs laughed again, though why the *Lard* sahib should kiss a shrivelled old woman beats my comprehension, since even her brass guns were honeycombed and not worth having. Two days later one hundred cannon opened against the town.

“Years after, when the Sirkar had given me to Scindiah, and he in the Terror had lent me to the English, and I helped bring the siege-guns to Delhi with Jan Nikalseyn, I heard the cannon during the last days on the Ridge; but there was nothing like those at Bhurtpur, not even when the English sacked Lucknow. That was the last time I heard a gun fired in anger, and the Sirkar gave me back to Scindiah when fortress Gwalior was restored to him. So now I live in peace, Shisha Nag; but it's dull enough, for there's never a fight and rarely a rape, year in, year out: it's years since I've seen the English

cannon till to-day, though now I've seen more white soldiers than ever marched with Carnwallis sahib and his Grand Army; but why they don't use elephants to draw their guns I know not, and perhaps am too old to care. That jemadar mahout who lights these foolish *chirags* sees me well fed, lest I tear him limb from limb, as I served the last who stole my sugar; and that's all I now care about,—for I'm old, Shisha Nag, and weak, and have waited a hundred years and more for *Lard* Carnwallis sahib, *bahadur-i-bahaduran*, to need me once again."

And here that weird beast trumpeted shrilly, and the line of elephants in rear seemed to move in the dust and the smoke of the fires, while mingled with them came horse and foot, Tippu and Bajee Rao, with their trains of artillery, Lord Cornwallis himself on old Seevaji, in tie-wig and Kevenheuller hat, Arthur Wellesley on the missing Arab, spare and trim, De Boigne and Perron, with their French batteries, Colonel Skinner in his canary regimentals, swarthy and eager, the Begum Samru beside him, Pathan and Rohilla, Mahratta and Pindari, Moplah and Vilayati in one ghostly panorama, with myself in gunner mess-kit, astride the devil gun, harnessed in the procession, till—I awoke in my own Kabul tent in the grey Indian dawn, still in uniform, my imperturbable *khidmatgar* standing

at my side with my tea ; while glancing furtively through the opening of the tent, his opium-box suggestively in his hand, stood old Sheikh Bhulloo, whom I had last seen cowering by that devil gun, as a century of Indian history filed before us.

"MARLBROOK S'EN VA-T-EN GUERRE."

BARREN, snow-swept, and bitter, cool and pine-shaded, scorching, raw red, and sun-dried, according to its mood, the season of the year, and its height above the sea, stretches the North-West Frontier of India.

Flush with the old Sikh border, British rule, peace, fair plenty, and regular cess, with law and even justice, so far as may be, hold interrupted sway. Across the border, a line which for the most part skirts the ragged moraines and sandy flats that fringe the rising sand-hills, the tribes, hand against every man and all against authority, fight and murder and rape at their own sweet will, exactly as in the good old days when Timur, the lame Tartar, came down the Gomul, or Ahmad Shah Dourani fled back to Kabul, with all the ill-got gain that Nadir the Persian had stripped from the Moghul.

It has been perforce the policy of all who rule the Panjab to let well alone the hornet's nest that lies across the border, though many

a ruler has imbibed this lesson at the point of the hornet's sting. It is ill taking the breeks off a Highlander, and there has been little to gain and much to lose by trailing a coat in the border hills. Since, therefore, the dragon's teeth are but a poor crop, it has come about that for many generations the boundary between India and the clans has been the foot of the stone-faced spurs that nature has so clearly indicated as the frontier.

The march of trade and progress, and the now century-old shadow of the slowly advancing bear, ever thrown ahead, has made us gradually absorb some portion of the hills that hedge the Indian plains. After years of consideration and controversy, through which gleams the law that the civilised must in time absorb the savage, it has now been settled that we must dominate the routes that lead through the tangled highlands to the central Asian plateau. These routes, as far as the Afghan frontier, are now to some extent under British rule; but along the length of the border, for many hundred miles, lie the tribal highlands, with which, so long as the inhabitants can live and let live, we have no direct concern.

As the Highlands of Scotland were, when the Clan Chattan fought the Clan Quheile on the North Inch of Perth, so are to this day, or even

more savage, the highlands that lie between the administered border of the North-West Frontier of India and the political border where the British sphere of influence marches with the definite frontier line of Afghanistan. In these highlands in this twentieth century, he who holds the longer purse may live the longer life; and since most men's purses are empty, it usually befalls that he who has the better rifle proves the better man.

In the interests of humanity, it may be that Britain had better act up to her responsibility, in administering, for the good of mankind, these same highlands; but to bring that about, many good lives and much good gold must needs be spent, with the prospect of many years' guerilla trouble before peace and prosperity can flourish. Therefore, since even the British purse has a bottom, the frontier highlanders are left to live and die in their own strange fashion, provided always that their neighbours within the British border are not interfered with. After the wild unexpected risings of the tribes in 1897, troops for a time were camped across the border. But, since highly trained troops have other fish to fry than doing police work on the fringes of the trade-routes to Afghanistan, the old policy of the British, that of "set a thief to catch a thief," has been brought into play. As the Black Watch

were raised to keep the marches on that other Highland border a century and a half ago, so a large Pathan tribal militia have now been raised to keep their folk in order.

To raise this militia and to train them, so far as may be, in the discipline of the Indian Army, some of the best officers of that service have been employed. The duty can hardly be called a safe one, for each militia officer carries his life in his hand. To murder a British officer is, to many tribesmen, a feat similar to the spearing a fine boar or shooting a record ibex by the British sportsmen; and tribesmen enlist to watch for an opportunity to get a white head, with all the unconcern that a sahib goes to Ladakh to shoot ibex. Only in the spring of 1905 was one of the best of frontier soldiers, the officer commanding the Southern Waziristan Militia, a man beloved by Pathans, bayoneted at dinner in his own mess by a shaveling. This lad had enlisted with the express purpose of killing a sahib, and thereby proving that the particular family to which he belonged was as good a one as another from which a soldier had come who had murdered an officer the preceding autumn.

As one officer falls another takes his place, despite the heartless sneer from a distant Government that discipline seems bad in that particular militia. As if two or three officers could tame

hundreds of men, from tribes of whom one of the great authorities said—and he loved them too —“Cold-blooded heartless murder, ruthless, needless treachery, is to them as the salt of life!”

Now all the foregoing but serves to give some setting to the following story of frontier amenities, and the varieties that give spice and zest to what otherwise might be monotony.

In one of the frontier tracts — it does not matter which, for there are many in the country of Yaghistan, which in the vulgar tongue means the country of the unruly — there was once a British agent who wanted to call his own province the Yaghistan Agency, but the Supreme Government thought it too well described his own firebrand policy. Now the Clan Chattan and the Clan Quheile of those parts had both furnished a militia corps to gag themselves—to wit, the Lwara Levy and the Northern Yaghistan Rifles. That is to say, the men of the two corps had become common soldiers of the *Sirkar*,¹ and were bound to refrain from shooting each other from behind convenient bushes except when on leave of absence, all of which was passing irksome to men used to be each a law unto himself.

The allowances which the tribes received in return for finding lads for the militia did not,

¹ Government.

in the opinions of the majority, compensate for any restraint on the right of free murder and well-devised treachery. The British officers whose lot it was to sojourn with the simple mountaineers had, English-like, hoped to turn the hereditary rivalry and feud to some success in the matter of hockey and socker, and there was certainly some zest in a match that might be finished the next leave season with a martini and two-handed knife.

However, the militia policy of Government, thanks to the energy and tact of the local officers, and the reverence which the finer type of officer can instil in the tribesmen's hearts, was proving something of a success, rather to the chagrin of the pessimists and to the undue elation of those who had initiated the policy, and thought that because a swallow had come, lo! summer was upon them. So the Lwara Levy and the Yaghistan Rifles took to hockey with happy zest, content that they should, till better times came, beat the sons of burnt fathers at "Haki" for the want of a stronger strife. And behold, the Lwara Levy beat the heads off the Rifles at hockey and football, and even at match-shooting, with their own pet weapon, the martini, whereat blood surged in Pathan veins, and the Britons smiled as they reported that natural ill-will was giving way before the healing influence of sport.

Now, the particular passes that the rival corps existed to protect, merged into the great Indus *kachi* of sand and put, hard by the frontier town of Usterzai, where the metalled frontier road came up from the rail-head on the great river itself; and down to this town on escort duty, on short leave, or on business, came from time to time parties of the rival levies, and even of the tribes themselves.

Usterzai, as a frontier town, saw much of the come-and-go of the border,—Ghilzai camels from Khorassan and Ghuzni with carpets and hides and ponies, Persian pussy-cats and olive-cheeked babies tied on great hairy camels that thought nothing of the rock-strewn passes.

Now, since a woman must come into a story in which trouble is brewing, so in this case the stormy petrel was the leading personage in the main street by the old Lodi gate. And to talk of Usterzai, where men say Alexander camped a full year and reaped his crops, is by inference to talk of the Begum Allah Visaya, who knew more about border and, ay, of Kabul politics too, than most of the politicals on the frontier, always excepting the elder Dugald. Now "Begum" is a title that may be assumed, like "Contessa" or a Polish prefix, but the Begum Allah Visaya (the gift of God) chose to be so styled, and what she willed was often law in the town

of Usterzai. In proof of her right to rule men-folk, in the scented porch of her serai hung the inevitable oleograph of his Majesty the King-Emperor, below which o' Fridays an oil-lamp would duly burn, not as a sign of worship, but as tribute to the greatest rule she knew.

To the Begum's courtyard, and up to her carved and latticed verandah, came every ruffler on the border-side who had enough *nous* to be able to make himself presentable to a lady of fashion, as well as half the traders from Kabul and Ghuzni and Herat. Thus the secrets of the border often were as an open book to Allah Visaya. Now she was a lady of some aspirations, and, among others, had the desire to become a landowner. To this end she had made it her business to keep on terms with the Assistant-Commissioner of the border, whose seat on a horse, as well as his power to bestow a farm on the new canal-reclaimed upland by the Indus, had appealed to her imagination. From time to time some hint of a coming raid or clue to a baffling murder would reach the Englishman from a source that he had come to recognise. Being a man of the world, he cocked his hat as he rode through the Lodi gate, and dangled indefinite promises regarding canal-land in quarters which would carry the remark.

Such was the position when, one evening in

early autumn, as the blue promise of coming winter was growing on the hills and the first *kafillas* were threading the passes down to the Indus bridges, the hockey team of the Lwara Levy, having beaten the team of the Yaghistan Rifles into half a dozen cocked hats, after withdrawing with suitable arrogance from the headquarters of that corps, entered the town of Usterzai on their return to their own district. It was no part of their rôle to minimise their victory at the sahibs' new game, and when the inevitable visit to the Begum's serai was made, they had plenty to say of their own success.

Next day came down a strong party of the Yaghistan Rifles under a native officer to escort a consignment of new rifles for his corps; and since a breech-loading rifle is worth its weight in rupee silver, its care and custody is no light penalty, and great is the tribulation to the Indian soldier concerned, when a breech-loading rifle disappears. Now, it happened that this same consignment was a bit late on its way up from the rail-head, and the escort found itself with some days on its hands in the town of Usterzai. The subahdar in command was a Bhoosa Khel of Rangar, and if you know aught of Yaghistan you will know what that means, and that there have been Bhoosa Khels in Rangar long before the Douranis came out of the captivity in Baby-

lon. Moreover, you will know that Bhoosa Khel politics and sentiments are most uncompromisingly *Samil*, while those of the majority of tribes who serve in the Lwara Levy were emphatically *Gar*, which is a division dating from two historical brothers, as bitter as that of the Red and White Rose in Merrie England.

Add to this the fact that Subahdar Yar Muhammad of Rangar was captain of the Rifle hockey team, and a rival of Jemadar Mahboob Ali, the Levy leader, in the affections of the Begum Allah Visaya, and it is clear that a very pretty situation existed that autumn evening in the town of Usterzai.

Mahboob Ali had already visited his inamorata, and had bored her with his vapourings and his boastings of superiority and success, but since he had brought suitable gifts was received and duly petted. Yar Muhammad, on a similar mission bent, entered the serai, and ascended to the latticed room, whence the twang of a zither met his ear, and where he found the Begum singing on her silken cushion, and his rival, in the full enjoyment of his own content and a well-filled hookah, reclining at his ease in her corner.

Since in all nations quarrels in a lady's salon are taboo, the subahdar was fain to receive another hookah and subside into the opposite corner, while the hostess finished her famous

Persian song of the *Girafteh Badshah*, or the "Captive King."

The amorous lament died away out through the lattice to the twilight and the dying silhouette of the border hills. The Begum sank back into her crimson cushions of Badakshani silk, and pulled away at her silver pipe-bowl till the rose-water in the vase below the *chillum* bubbled again, while she lay back, and the dark eyes from under the pencilled eyelids watched with keen zest, as many another fairy before her, two proper men ready to fly at each other's throats for the sake of those same eyes. And as she watched, the sight of the handsome subahdar and the memory of earlier passages softened the glance that shot in his direction, to the keen chagrin of the watchful Mahboob. Whereat the devil prompted him, so that, forgetful of the golden silence, he embarked on the silver speech to his own bitter undoing. "Oh, ho! *Khanjee*," quoth he, "and how are the noblemen of the Rifles—the straw men of the Bhoosa Khel?"

Now this was a sahib's joke, fifty years old and more, when the resemblance of the word *bhusa*, the chopped straw fodder of the frontier, to the name of a fighting clan, had appealed to the trivial sense of humour of the Englishman. It was, however, one thing for a sahib to say to a native officer, in familiarity born of mutual

appreciation, that he was a man of straw, and quite another for a swine of a Lwara to use it to a frontier gentleman in a lady's drawing-room, for the sake of exciting that same lady's derision, since the *jeu*—though European—was patent enough to the Oriental.

Now it has been wisely misquoted, "Put not your faith in women." And Mahboob, the winner of hockey, the swashbuckler and lavisher of presents, had offended the Begum's caprice, so that she straightway went over to the side of the subahdar, which he of little wit, that said Mahboob, failed to see, and was properly aghast when the Begum said in honeyed tones, "Come, sit here, Khan sahib, and tell me of the Rifles, who can sometimes speak of other things than themselves. No wonder that all men are weary of the Lwara. Ready of lip and loose of tongue, like the young crows in the buckwheat field."

"Loose of tongue we may be, Allah Visaya Begum," spat the jemadar, "but women we hold tight enough; no woman of the Lwara, or Begum either for that matter, ever became a house-top jade; a noseless face and a veil to cover it would be your share of Lwara looseness," and out of the door he swung.

When Mahboob Ali in contempt, chagrin, and wrath had clattered out of the room, the Begum stood pale with rage at the insult, and the rival

amazed at his luck. The lady stamped her feet. "Is that how you allow men to treat me?" quoth she, unmindful that she herself had raised the tempest out of sheer devilment. "Am I to be scorned by every beggarly jemadar of border levies? If you can swallow his insult, I won't. Never you enter this house again, Yar Muhammad. Rightly enough is the sahib's jest applied to you. Man of straw you are and man of straw you will remain," and here the infuriated lady paused for breath, and the subahdar, wise in his generation, bowed to the storm. Indeed, he was little enough likely to swallow an insult from a hereditary enemy, even when arrayed as a brother-officer of his Majesty's forces, but believed that he scored who spoke last and acted first: besides, a woman's tantrums were no new thing, and were quite separate from business.

Two wives at home in Rangar had made him wise, and in addition his hand could keep his head, so craftily he said, "Peace, almond-eyed, and I will take up your quarrel and my own too, but you would not have us brawl here, and bring that unhung thief, the inspector of police, on us, and get you into disrepute with the Assistant-Commissioners, or me figure before my commanding officer as a brawler when on duty in Usterzai? Let us put our heads together

and read the scoffer a lesson." And here the thought of the watered land on the new canal came to the Begum, and she saw that even the *éclat* of a free rough-and-tumble, with a corpse perhaps thrown in, for the glory of her *beaux yeux*, had wiser be forgone; so, subsiding back on to her cushions, she again took up her pipe and gazed on the brightening Aldebaran as it rose in the cold distant east. And the man also sat and gazed, knowing the golden silence and the bubbling pipe as sure producers of wise counsel.

For a full hour the two gazed into the east, till Betelguex and the belt of Orion stood clear in the heavens, and the Begum said, "I have it; capture the swine of a Lwara at his own post, steal his rifles, and slit his throat, or leave him and his men trussed like capons for his sahib to find him, slip back here, and march to his rescue, reporting that Afghan outlaws have raided his post."

And the Begum looked at the subahdar, and the two laughed long and merrily, and the subahdar nodded his head and clenched his hand, and whistled an air did he. "The Levy party return in the morning by the valley road, do they, and his post is Zargah Narai, twenty miles from here? That is good enough for me." So the plan was soon arranged, and, the storm

allayed, the Begum played on her zither, and the subahdar drank brick-tea from a brass sam-over, till the chance-comer would have seen no signs of the coming trouble, and, finally, the subahdar took his leave and went to see his party in their camp.

Now, paying off old scores on one who offends is no doubt a very pleasing amusement so long as one's own nose is not damaged in the attempt, and so thought the Begum later, when a friend dropped in to chat, and she heard that the canal was finished and the claimants for grants of land many, while he who would prove his claim must show good cause, and of all claims good service to Government came first. All the next day the question of her own claim for land came before her, and how she could best prove some claim.

That evening the subahdar came early to say that the Levy had left, and all was ready for his start a bit later, and, weary, laid him down for an hour's sleep on the red carpet by the corner, whereon she sat and fanned him, as Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, sat by the side of Sisera.

Soon after eight that evening the subahdar took a tender farewell, and started on his errand, and she, as soon as he was well away, slipped through a door in the back of the old serai, clad

in a *birka*,¹ through which her two eyes alone peered modestly, and sped with steps uncertain through the cobbled streets, past the jam of vile-smelling camels from Khorassan, past the Government tonga-yard and the police barracks, till she came to the civil rest-house. There a khaki-clad sentry stopped her and jocularly demanded her business, while a red-coated messenger also came up. "You want to see the sahib, do you, my dear?" quoth he, "and what do you suppose sahibs have got to do that the sahib should see you at dinner-time? and what veiled woman are you that you should want to see him?" And then some one called the sentry, so that the Begum was alone with the *chaprassi*.² "Ten rupees for you, chaprassi, if I can see the sahib at once." And since ten rupees are a good deal, even to a Tehsil chaprassi, and he could always pretend ignorance if the sahib was annoyed at the woman's entrance, he let her into the Assistant-Commissioner's room, to the undisguised horror of that officer's respectable old Moham-medan servant.

Captain John Hackling, now a frontier "political," had been brought up in a regiment of Frontier Force Cavalry, which means that his education in all that a handy soldier and a man versed in frontier ways of the-world should

¹ A sort of domino.

² A messenger and hall-porter.

know, had not been neglected. So knowing that a veiled lady does not always mean a noseless face, and that the eternal feminine and the worst sort of trouble are closely connected, he cleared his room and waited for light. It was not long in coming, as the veil lifted to an odour of musk and sandal, and John Hackling spotted who his visitant must be, she who was "in" half the troubles on the border-side, and had hunted with the hounds too, on occasion, like better people before her, and who had more than once found that it suited her book to supply clues to border mysteries.

The Begum was not long in proceeding to business, and Hackling was not loath to proffer discreet encouragement. So that in a very few moments he was in possession of all the facts regarding Yar Muhammad's intended raid, and had promised in return for the information that he would very strongly urge her claim to a grant of free land on the new canal. She further stipulated that Subahdar Yar Muhammad should not be severely dealt with for his pains. To all of which the soldier-political agreed, chiefly because the peace of his portion of the border was a matter in which his honour was very peculiarly concerned, and partly, oh yes, partly, because the Begum was a remarkably fine woman, and as well-versed as any of her European sisters in

bending a man to her will. So, with his promise on both counts, her naughtiness withdrew, discreetly muffled in her *birka*, leaving Hackling with the feeling that he had got hold of at least one flash of lightning by the tail,—a feeling which is more than exhilarating to the choicer spirits. So while the soldier sat him down to make his plans, the lady returned to her apartments over the gateway, and there slept the sleep of the just.

Late that morning the men of the Levy, who had revelled the night before, had swaggered out of the town, with Jemadar Mahboob at their head, wishing the escort of the Rifles good health and more practice at the game of "Haki," and more proficiency in man's weapon, the rifle; whereat the Yaghistan Rifles squirmed and spat, and prayed for the furlough season, as the Levy slouched out up the road to the mouth of the Lwara Pass.

At nine that evening Subahdar Yar Muhammad and thirteen fellow Bhoosa Khels slipped out of a walled garden hard by the outskirts of the town, dressed as the everyday scamp of the countryside; but with the good Government martinis in their hands, and forty rounds of ball in their pouches. Their destination was the mud-walled post and tower of Zargah Narai, from which Jemadar Mahboob Ali controlled the

chain of posts that watched the first twenty miles or so of the Lwara gorge.

Across country from the homestead the subahdar and his party sped, over irrigation channels and small bits of marsh-land, round which flight-ing mallard and teal duck swished invisible, past the old ruined Powindah fort, past the empty Levy tower and the mound that marked the site of a Græco - Bactrian post, till the irrigated fields changed to *put*,¹ and *put* to pebbles and boulders, and they struck the old path up the northern cliffs over the gorge. Since a knowledge of the road is half the difficulty in a night march, the Rifle *barampta*² made good going, keeping away from the haunts of man and the ken of a barking dog. Four and a half hours after starting, close on nineteen of the twenty miles had been traversed, and the party slipped down by a track that only Pathans and a markhor would tackle at night, to the wide open kach where the Tizha stream joins the Lwara, a couple of miles above which spot stands the Zargah Narai post.

The said post stands, built of mud and stone, on a small rocky spur overhanging the Tizha, at a point where the road to the Ramelaan plain branches northwards, and asleep inside lay Jemadar Mahboob and a garrison of ten

¹ Put=alluvial dried-mud soil.

² A surprise party.

men, barring always the sentry over the closed gate.

It was not, however, till close on four in the morning that the subahdar's plans began to bear fruit, and the light of a fading moon made the darkness of the shadows impenetrably black.

In the south-east corner, farthest away from the gate, a bare angle of the post wall lay without flanking or machicoli defence, and to this a rope and a grapnel had been silently flung. Suddenly and silently a turbaned head appeared over the parapet, silhouetted in the misty moonlight, to be followed by another and another, each quietly dropping into the shadow that the parapet wall threw on the rampart, till the subahdar himself and twelve sons of Belial lay eagerly listening,—and all the while the Levy sentry in the gallery over the gateway leant on his rifle, his puggaree half-closing his ear to sound, and drowsily wondered if it was time for his relief.

If the wages of sin are death, the wages of sleep are often so to the sentry, and he, knowing it full well, sleeps on, in every army under the sun. The commander whose neighbouring forces or posts have been scuppered always enjoys a peaceful night, in the certain knowledge that perhaps for a full week his own sentries have been galvanised into a full measure of

alertness. In South Africa nothing but a disaster a-week would make the soldier, of his own initiative, careful.

The wage was very near that drowsy sentry on the gate of Zargah Tiarza Levy-post.¹ Another moment and a blanket was thrown over his head, and since he in his folly must needs gurgle and guggle, a knife in his heart settled his struggles. He who would engineer a night surprise must always be prepared for the undoing of a sentry in cold blood; but to our Pathan friends cold murder brought no qualms. Then followed the *débâcle*. The guard in the little guard-room was speedily overpowered, and as the remainder of the garrison struggled out from their quarters they were seized and bound, and among them was Jemadar Mahboob. Never was there such a successful raid: fourteen Government rifles and three thousand rounds of martini ammunition—a bag to be proud of. Leaving their victims securely tied and locked up in the post rooms, the raiders leisurely collected their spoil and started for the cross-country track to Yaghistan in the highest of spirits just as the first faint indication of the false dawn stirred the atmosphere. But before they left temptation proved too much for Yar Muhammad, who, stooping to the trussed form of Mahboob,

¹ Called Zargah Post for short.

whispered, "Oh ho, my Jemadar jee! what about 'Haki' now? He laughs the loudest who laughs the last;" and the wondering Mahboob squirmed. Since the raid had been silent, and neither rifle-shot nor cry had stirred the hour that precedes dawn, there was no need for hurry, and the tired party of the Rifles made their way leisurely towards the ford by the Tizha junction.

But the race is not always to the swift, nor the victory to the strong.

Half an hour after the Begum had left John Hackling, that energetic officer had called for his boots and his horse and his pipe and his good Colt pistol, and was riding away into the night. Now four miles out from Usterzai, at the mouth of the Laki Zam, fifty rifles and thirty sabres of the regular army held an outpost on the border that lent some moral and material support to the militia and border police, under the command of one Ressaldar Kesri Singh Jamwal. Thither in thirty minutes more arrived the Assistant-Commissioner, and soon twenty-five sabres were busy enough saddling their horses.

A little after an hour from the time of the Begum's departure from the civil rest-house, Captain John Hackling and Ressaldar Kesri Singh, with five-and-twenty Dogra troopers behind them, were clattering out of the gateway of Zarkanni Post, and heading for the main



road up the Lwara Pass. The raiders, it was certain, had not gone that way, and for the present concealment was not worth the time it would take.

Pitch-dark was the gorge at the entrance to the Pass, and deadly still the night, till the defile echoed to the troopers' clatter, and the sentry on the border watch-tower overhanging the gut challenged loudly. The road in the gorge was sandy, and as the party trotted steadily the officer made his plans. "The track from Zargah Tiarza to Yaghistan crosses the Lwara kach by the Tizha junction," said the Ressaldar, "and that is the only ford for eight miles up or down. The path slips down by a cutting, and the river-banks are steep. If they raid Zargah Tiarza they must get across the ford early, but cannot well get there before dawn." "Right oh! Ressaldar Sahib!" said Hackling, "there we will go. It will be twenty-eight miles to Zargah by the main pass road and twenty-five to the ford, and that is as much as we can cover. If we can't save the post we shall, at any rate, catch the raider."

And the party trotted on in the dark, past sand and recurring fords and stony *ragzas*, that struck sparks from a hundred hoofs, past smouldering camp-fires, past militia posts and levy towers, which sometimes challenged and

sometimes slept, till the waning moon rose over the crest and the shadows in the gorge grew darker by contrast, as a few miles on they were darkening for the subahdar's surprise, "Eight miles to go and an hour and a half to do it," said Hackling, as he pulled his party up to a halt for a breather. "We'll ease up a bit. No good killing stout horses for a set of flaming militiamen;" and he led off again at a walk out of the pass into a sandy basin and the arc-light shine of the moon in the mist, for all the world like Charing Cross Station in a fog, that glinted on lance-point and rifle-barrel. Then on into the dark again, till a fresh bright patch shone ahead, and the party halted at 4 A.M. a hundred yards from the opening by the ford at the Tizha junction.

The dispositions were simple enough: three dismounted men on the opposite side of the ford among the rocks, six mounted men up and down the *kachi*,¹ hidden under the cliff to bar the level exits, then the Ressaldar and three, watching the approach and ready to close it from behind, and finally Hackling himself with six men at the bottom of the cut to the ford. The "numbers three" with the led horses were to remain in the shelter of the gorge. It was close on five o'clock by the time the dispositions

¹ River flat.

were complete, and by five-thirty a faint glimmer of dawn appeared in the sky, and the watchers shivered while the breath beaded on their beards. . . . Six o'clock, and a distant snow-capped peak lit up in the rising sun, while a dark haze shrouded the valley. . . . Six-fifteen, and the red stone crowns of the nearer hills assumed a redder hue. . . . Six-twenty, and the Ressaldar sent word that some one was approaching—one—two—three—a dozen of men, . . . with two rifles apiece and bulging havresacks, . . . along the stony *ragza* down into the gut of the ford. One man is a hundred yards ahead, and as he steps on to the sand, a rifle-barrel from out the haze presses itself on his attention. Wise in his generation, he allows himself to be seized and gagged. In a jumble together come the others, chatter and laugh, into the pitfall, and Hackling, with six stout troopers behind him, steps out to bar the way, as the Ressaldar closes the descent at its upper entrance. "Halt, Subahdar Yar Muhammad!" shouts the former, and the mounted men as they clatter up have the appearance of half a squadron in the mist, so that Subahdar Yar Muhammad sees that the game is up, and surrenders at discretion. One man alone had made a bolt along the *kachi*, and had received a lance-point in the ribs for his pains.

"Well, you flaming militia!" says Hackling.

"These are pretty fine games! How now, Master Yar Muhammad?" But the subahdar, for once in his venturous, and up till now successful, career, could but hang his head; and the frontier officer, reflecting, ordered: "Keep the prisoners in the pass here, while I and a dozen men go to the Levy post. Let no man approach within sight of them." It was highly desirable that the raid should be kept secret, lest the two militias break out also, for lawlessness is infectious.

So Hackling rode to the fort, and there he found the garrison struggling with their bonds; whereon he released them, and handed back their rifles. The dead sentry he saw too, and swore an oath, but said, "Thus die all drowsy sentinels. It will keep those on the border side awake for a bit, at any rate. . . ." And wakefulness is the lesson that the soldier forgets easiest of all. Now since Mahboob the crest-fallen asked little better than silence and freedom from jibe and jest, he took his rifle sullenly and without a word, and the unbound garrison slunk away to their posts. Further action was deferred for consideration, and the cavalry marched back their prisoners to their own post at Zarkanni; and on the way back the subahdar walked beside the captain and unburdened his mind as man to man. The captain, well pleased with his own success, in his heart of hearts sympathised with

the lawless spirit that brooked no jibe, . . . and put his own views of the matter on paper. What he said to the Government of India will not see the light of day for many a year; but in that well-informed semi-official Indian paper, 'The Pioneer,' appeared the following: "A party of raiders from across the Afghan border raided the Lwara line a few nights ago, and surprised the Zargah Tiarza post, securing several rifles and killing one man of the Levy. Fortunately that energetic frontier political, Captain John Hackling, received early news of the raid, and, pursuing the attackers with the cavalry from Zarkanni, succeeded in recapturing the missing rifles. No political significance is attached to the outrage."

Shortly after it was announced that Subahdar Yar Muhammad and twelve Yaghistani Militia sepoy had been selected to join the new African contingent. Among colonisation notices in the Government 'Gazette' it appears that a grant of canal-land was given to one Begum Allah Visaya of Usterzai, the reasons for the grant and the services of the grantee not being stated. Further, it may be noted that the Lwara Levy and the Yaghistan Rifles still keep watch and ward on the border-side, but that inter-regimental matches of all kinds have been discontinued.

If you ever go down to the rail-head on the

Indus and cross the bridge of boats, driving by the *elka* road through the park-like scenery of the Barajat, you may see on the banks of the Darra Zam canal, by a grove of fig-trees and a pomegranate orchard, a two-storied mud house with a latticed verandah. Here the Begum still holds court with the ceremony that befits a political grandee, and still keeps her looks, and with them her power and knowledge of affairs on the border; and men say that if that turbulent priest and notorious wolf's-head the Mullah Mutha is caught, the Begum Allah Visaya will have had some concern in the matter. "*Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit.*"

KHAKOO! KHAKI.

"KARKÄRÄ, karkärä, karkärä," rasped the hoarse cries of a frightened knoor-haan across the crisp silence of the veldt, as the bird, flushed from its bed in a karoo-patch, flapped away into the night.

A rhythmic thresh-thresh, that had accompanied but hardly broken the silence, suddenly ceased, as a party of mounted infantry, every whit as scared as the bird, propped at the weird sound, for nerves in the early morning are not all steel, and laughed to itself in relief, as the knoor-haan showed in silhouette across the sinking moon. Not the full moon of Merrie England, with its gnarled familiar faces, but the inverted moon of the southern seas, showing the figure of Britannia, erect with trident and attendant lighthouse, for all the world like a British halfpenny, showing blue in the golden setting, to the intense chagrin of every observant foreigner that dare trespass south of the line, so that he who runs may read the portent.

"Oh my, what a noise! eh!" whispered the Afrikaner guide to the subaltern at the head of the party.

"Damn that bird!" swore the Saxon; "who the devil put him up? I hope the brethren aren't about—pass the word down to move along," added he, true to the rule of the night-raider that says, "Keep on the move when dangers threaten at night, and volleys are possible." Apparently, however, it was the column itself that had disturbed the bird, or at worst a Boer scout, for the British pursued their way in file unmolested, and the drowsy troopers dozed off again, to lurch on their wallets, should their horses check or stumble.

The war that we are fast forgetting was now wearing to a close, and twelve months of night-raids had taught the farmers that a farmhouse at night was the surest of traps, to which only the most venturesome of lovers dare trust himself, so that they slept in the open by spruit or kop or ranjie, and only came up to the homesteads in full daylight, in which no "khaki" could possibly be hidden.

Therefore it was that prisoners were scarce, and information scarcer, and there was little enough data for Lord Kitchener to bend to his purposes, or for a column commander to engineer a *coup*. A K. K. K. wire had come down the line

in that mysterious cipher, saying that prisoners must be caught and news obtained. So every cunning commander called to him his intelligencer, his chief scout, and every reiving knave that knew the veldt, and each concocted plans as best his wits would let him.

Some sent parties by night, by long detours, to occupy some spruit, or nek, or drift twenty miles or so away, and then in the morning would march the rest of their column on a wide front, their baggage following, in full daylight, with dust and rattle and pomp and circumstance, so that patrols of the brethren, avoiding the sledgehammer, might scuttle back into the ambush, that closed as it were the neck of the funnel.

Others paraded the country with tame and spurious prisoners, held in chains, whom a brutal escort would thrust into a farmhouse during a halt, to canoodle coffee and information from sympathetic "Boereens," while the exits were ostentatiously guarded. And the best of such spurious prisoners was an English doctor from the Rand, well versed in the ways of the chosen, who, with a flaming sandy beard, ragged corduroys, and a Rip Van Winkle hat, never failed to extract loving information.

The Constabulary with their line of posts had invented a game of simultaneous raiding that they termed "Pounce-out-piggy," and held in

high esteem, and every other commander of any parts had pet devices of his own.

The column to which our party, the same that jumped to the croak of the knoor-haan, belonged, was commanded by a soldier of more than usual parts, who combined with much rough-and-tumble experience many wise saws and maxims imbibed during the course at the Staff College. He held that nothing is new under the sun, either in love or war; that what was good enough for Julius Cæsar was good enough for him; and that he who would catch the wild man, be he Arab or Afridee, Burman or Boer, must know a trick or two above the average. He had therefore despatched this party of mounted infantry to occupy by night a farm lying some fourteen miles from his own camp, to which he had a week or so earlier imported two families of good-looking girls, who had besought him to move them from the threatening vicinity of a Basuto location. He now proposed to gauge the strength of his bait, and his methods will appear later.

To achieve his end, forty picked Thomases of the original Mounted Infantry Corps, an Afrikaner guide, three white and two Kaffir scouts, under the command of his smartest subaltern, one Carstairs, a man of Devon, were now at 2 A.M., on a spring morning in October, threading their

way through the rolling veldt to the homestead of Luipersfontein, *bij* Witkop. Here dwelt the family of Gert van der Walt, veldt-cornet, reinforced by the selected families of Martinus Cornelius Vorster, from Spion-heuvel, and of Gabriel Albertus Terblanche of Plessis-dam, comprising three comfortable vraus, one sour anæmic maiden aunt, and half a dozen as comely *meisjes* as ever an isolated commando could wish to see.

"If you don't find lobsters in that pot, young feller, my lad," said our commander as he gave his last instructions to the party, "you're more of a fool than I take you for." Truly some guile comes of a blend of Camberley and campaigning. All of which excursion brings us abreast of our small party heading for Luipersfontein, none the worse for the flushing of the knoor-haan.

For a full two hours more the party threshed on through the rise and fall of the rolling veldt, by *vaal bosch* scrub and stony spruit, past empty kraal and deserted homestead, by poplar-grove and weeping-willow, till Britannia in her moon had long sunk behind the never-never horizon, that, trek as you may, you never can reach, while the false dawn gave light in her place, and stirred the breeze, as a sign that day was approaching. Once more the column stopped automatically, and the dozing troopers jolted into life as their

lean garrons propped to a weird sound borne on the morning breeze. Clear and distinct in the cool air came the refrain of a psalm as the eager party listened. The chief scout came scuttling back from his place a hundred yards ahead of the party. "Them gals is awake, I reckon, captain," said he. "'Taint mor'n four hundred yards off now. Pete-boy here says the shanty stands nigh the top o' the neck, with the kraal this side, about a hundred yards. He's been to the kraal, and their ain't no hawses in it."

Sutty the scout was an American, erstwhile the mate of a windjammer, with a year's cow-punching and a spell of frontier service as a trooper to his score, and as hard-bitten a partisan soldier as ever followed Stewart or Jackson.

"We'd best push on to the kraals, dismount, and surround the house, though 'taint likely any o' them Boer rustlers will be there," to which the officer nodded assent.

On pressed the party once more, as the psalm rose clearer and shriller from half a dozen young voices, till Carstairs felt he might be Graham of Claver'se and his dragoons scouring the moss-hags for a conventicle. The pastoral Boer, whatever his morals and principles, is a great singer of psalms: early to bed with a psalm, and earlier still to rise with a psalm and 'coffee to it, is the routine of the veldt, which makes for

wondrous eyesight, with never a book to strain the accommodation.

As the party drew up by the kraals and dismounted, the refrain of the "Quare fremuerunt" rose and fell to the accompaniment of a wheezy harmonium, clear and distinct in the crisp air:—

"Gij zult vergeefs mijn rijksbestel weerstreven :
Mijn Koning is gezalfd door mijn beleid :
Hij door mijn hand ap Zions troon verheven
Heerscht op den berg van mijne Heiligheid."¹

"We'll soon close this conventicle, and see if any brethren are attending. The first two groups with Suttly to the far side, the next group to the right, the next to the left, six men and the guide to the door with me, Sergeant Corcoran and the remainder to stay here with the horses," rapped out Carstairs decisively.

Up the stony path to the homestead, showing white amid half a dozen poplars and ragged blue-gums, sped the raiders, the subaltern and his party waiting a moment to allow of the house being surrounded before he ventured on the hazard of forcing the door, always the anxious moment, lest a volley from trapped desperadoes from the dark of the interior greet the summons to surrender.

Tied to a tree by the stoep stood two saddled

¹ "Yet have I set my king : upon my holy hill of Sion."

ponies, with ragged quilts rolled on the pommels. "Aha! some one in the bag," reflected Carstairs as he and a corporal sprang to the door, while two others manned the windows right and left of it, one at each side, under cover.

"En ik, die Vorst, met zoo veel magt bedeed
Zal Gods besluit aan't wereldrond doen hooron
Hij sprak tot mij . . ." ¹

rose the psalm again, while the harmonium wheezed and quavered.

"Hands-up all here!" rang out Carstairs's voice; then, "Come out, all the men."

A sudden silence, and then screams from within. "Allemachtig! De khakis staat op de stoep! Johanna, waar is Dirk? Waar nu is mijn geweer?" ("Where is my rifle?")

"Tell the men to come out, Van Rensberg," thunders Carstairs to the guide.

"Burghurs, u moet uit kom" ("You must come out"), shouts the latter, and two sheepish-looking sandy-haired lads emerge, held back by two voluble girls, during which time the parties surrounding the house have closed in on the house and occupied the back-door and the windows. "Waar is uw geweer, jongen?" asks the guide. "In de sit-kamer" (parlour), sullenly replies one of the Burghers, the one with eyes like an albino,

¹ "I will preach the law, whereof the Lord hath said unto me."

while the other disgorges a British army-pattern revolver.

"Every man to stay where he is and wait for orders," shouts the officer, who then with Suttu and another scout proceeds to make a rapid survey of the house before developing the cunning plans of his commander.

As he enters the *sit-kamer* one gradely lass flounces on to the harmonium-stool and strums out the Volkslied in bravado—bravado that hardly keeps back the tears, for is not her own Pete among the captured? Disregarding the lass, Carstairs proceeds with his inspection, and his plans are soon laid. Returning to the stoep, where the sergeant from the kraal had been summoned, he issues his orders.

"Here, Suttu, take half the women into that bedroom, keeping families intact; put up the shutters, and place a sentry over them; shut the door: knock out the top panel of the door, and put a sentry outside it. Rensberg, put the remainder in that room opposite, and do the same. Sergeant Corcoran, tell off the men for this duty. Corporal Jones, you go down to the kraal, have all the horses watered, and then leave them in the kraal. Stay yourself, with eight men, in the cowshed there. Now mind, no man is to show, and you are to keep a double sentry in the shed—is that all clear? Very good; remember,

not a man is to be seen. You may cook and smoke in the shed."

The women with much talking and expostulating were hustled off into the respective rooms, one or two already making friends with the khakis. Then, as Van Rensberg emerged from installing his party, the business of the day commenced. Carstairs' next order was to him.

"Now, get me five skirts, five white aprons, and five *kappies* [large sun-bonnets] from those girls. Now, Sergeant Corcoran, all men in the house to lie down in the centre room and not to move about. I want one sentry at the back- and one at the front-door. Look sharp, and then come to me here with the sentries."

In the corner of the room squatted, safely roped for the present, the two prisoners, now eagerly watching the proceedings, their glum looks gradually broadening to a grin as Rensberg emerged from ransacking the rooms with skirts found hanging up, without depriving the girls of them, and *kappies* from the wall-pegs. Anything "slim" always appealed to the Burgher, and it was a curious national trait that, directly he was in a hat himself, he was anxious to see his friends there too, even to taking an active part in their capture.

The sergeant now returned with the men for guard.

"Now listen to me, sentries and reliefs. I am expecting a Boer patrol here about 8 A.M. to a coffee-party, and hope to surprise them. The sentries are not to carry their rifles but to have them handy. No other men are to show at all. If you see any one coming, you are to warn the men inside, who are to get their rifles handy, but not to move till Mr Suttly or I give the order."

By this time a panel in each of the doors confining the women had been stove in, so that the sentry on the room could see, which enabled the women also to watch what was in progress. As they realised the devilry that Carstairs and his sentries had been up to, they raised a yell of execration and abuse, as well they might.

A stalwart Boer lass lounged against the lintel of each door of the house, a sun-bonnet above, and below her skirts peeped heavy Cossack boots with khaki putties atop, while under the upper flap of their aprons showed packed bandoliers. Outside on the stoep stood two other lasses, each in pink *kappies*, one with a broom, the other holding a pail, staring fixedly out to the west, a clear steely blue in protest to the glory of the approaching dawn opposite. The rest of the party, rifles by their side, were lying or sitting

round the *sit-kamer*, highly diverted at their officer's and comrades' disguises, as were also the two prisoners.

Two Boer girls here suddenly threw themselves on one of the sentries by the window-shutters of their room, in an effort to get away and give the alarm. The sergeant and Rensberg were equal to this, however. "Every girl who can't stay quiet will be tied up and gagged," said the latter. "Yah, hands-opper," came the retort, jauntily enough, though second thoughts prompted them to retire to the bed to watch events.

Sutty and Carstairs, the two pink-capped fairies, were now overhauling the geography of the locality. Half a mile to the west lay a ragged line of rocky outcrop, indented by a valley in which stood the homestead, rising to a neck some 1000 yards from the house, over which the road disappeared. To the east the track dropped sharply from the stoep to the kraals, and then streaked across the veldt to the next line of kopjies, three miles and more away. The stable by the kraal was the only out-building, and below it lay the dam and fountain fringed with weeping-willows, the happy home of ducks and geese before the tide of war and reiving irregulars had swept the land of all feathered food.

The usual *débris*-heap—sardine-tins, bones, and the inevitable broken axle—lay outside the door; far to the north the tops of three poplar-trees showed the dip where nestled the next farm. By the back-door were the cook-house and oven; inside the former hung half an ox, a big fire blazed in the copper, and on a shelf were piled thirty or forty huge square loaves.

"Guess there's going to be a party," remarked the American; "'specs they'll be here to breakfast."

"Rensberg had better find out from those girls what's up," said Carstairs. "I don't fancy we shall have long to wait,—rather a lark if the whole commando are coming," reflected he, and what a good scheme it was that the whole column would be at the range of kopjies behind by noon, ready to rescue the party if need be, to which end Carstairs had his company heliograph with him.

The dangerous game in South Africa was not the despatch of small parties by themselves, but the failure to be near enough to pick them out should they come to harm. Therefore the wise commander when organising a raid would say to his party, "I will come along to look after you, and will get into communication with you," stating hour and place. Thus the subaltern and his filibusterers would know that should they

get "hung up," they would be extricated if they could hold out to the hour arranged on—a far easier matter than holding on till all bandoliers were empty, and all the horses and half the men killed, with no chance of a rescue. Had it been always possible thus to support detachments, many surrenders would have been avoided.

So when Carstairs stumbled on the fatted calf and leavened loaves in the Luipersfontein kitchen, he realised that he was to be an unbidden guest at a party, and, despite the lark of it all, rejoiced that by twelve noon the column, horse, foot, and artillery, would be within hail. As he re-entered the house the sound of psalms once more arose; the wretched girls, doomed to watch the discomfiture of their friends, were trying to bear it bravely,—poor fun for them, however courteously the *mooi captan* had explained the situation. Artful preparations to capture slim Boers by a slim ruse, with their own *kappies* too—a pretty fine game! Where had these *verdomde rooinek*s learnt such guile? Why, from the Boers themselves, of course; just as the Boer commandoes, the latter-day ones, had learnt in exchange how discipline and initiative were necessary to success—lore from which the younger bloods were drawing much temporary profit.

"This singing must stop—where is Rensberg?"

calls Carstairs. Van Rensberg, in pursuit of his mission to get information, was sitting in the other room, a girl on each knee, canoodling and questioning by turns, for the Boers are a friendly people. This, too, was a less hostile room than the one opposite, for the majority of its occupants were Terblanches; since was not old Gabriel Terblanche a prisoner in Ceylon, out of harm's way and as happy as a king, while his brother in the colony was a loyal tobacco-farmer and J.P. to boot, though, to be sure, all the young Terblanches were on commando save two, 'Cos in the Cape Police and Gert in the South African Light Horse. Clearly interests in this family were amply divided, and it occupied a delightful and commanding position on the top of the fence—like many others. Such conditions give us much light on affairs in America during the War of Independence, when some were for Mr Washington and others for the King—God bless him!

However, Rensberg must leave his complacent lasses and enforce order in the other room. "If those sour-faced old devils don't keep their daughters quiet I shall burn this house before I go—tell them that, Rensberg," says the officer, for war is war and half-measures worthless. This ultimatum produces some effect, and the girl whose *fiancé* is one of the two prisoners

brightens to think that at any rate her man was out of harm's way, always a solace to any woman however patriotic,—better the salt sea than a six-foot grave by the lonely homestead cemetery beyond the kraal.

The guide now proceeded to divulge to Carstairs the results of his researches. "These prisoners belong to Frickie Fouché's commando, eighty men in all; he is sweet on Annie Vorster, and will probably be here just now and twelve men with him; he slept out west by the vlei yonder. The rest may come later with Veldt-Cornet Stoffel Vander Berg of Witrand, a *bai slim kerrel*. Jacobus du Toit with a hundred burghers is said to be coming just now from Knapzack rivier, to meet Munik Hertzog and his brother the *rechter* [judge], who are expected in these parts."

"*Ja wohl*," replies Carstairs. "The more the merrier, but the fewer the better fare."

The cool morning has now changed as the sun rose higher, and the veldt lies shimmering in the full glare of the southern mirage; the soldiers in the *sit-kamer*, their biscuits and baccy finished, doze and stretch after their night in the saddle. The skirted sentries lounge on the lintels; Carstairs even, relieved for a while by Satty, is dreaming of a big bag. Here and there little dust-devils pirouette in gullies and corners

or gyre and gimble along the track up the nek, forerunners of the afternoon breeze, that is at once the curse and the salvation of the African climate.

Nine o'clock—ten o'clock—10.30; the breakfast party is late. All was quiet, even the girls, though they had again attempted a mocking war ballad, printed at President Steyn's travelling press, with the contemptuous refrain "Khakoo! khaki" at the end of each verse. Rensberg successfully competed with this disturber. In one of the rooms the children, of whom there were several, had started their criss-cross row, changing to a monotonous "Ik zie de kat, daar zit een rat, de kat lust de muis"; apparently one of the Terblanche girls was the local school-marm. The reading-lesson changed to the old world-wide rhyme, "Anna en haar lam":—

"De kleine Anna had een lam,
Als sneeuw zoo wit zij u vel."

Nothing could be more desirable than this to allay suspicion, and it was not interfered with, but ere long died into silence. The dust-devils increased in size, Suttie peered from under his *kapjie* and cleared his revolver from his apron-strings, a dozing soldier muttered in his sleep.

Suddenly back from rocks by the nek runs the Basuto scout, who has been watching to the

west since dawn. Two Boers are riding up the track towards the farm, and he thinks more are following, but the mirage among the *vaal bosch* scrub is tricky. Carstairs is aroused, and at once orders the sentries to loaf about in the verandah, wakes all the men, warning them to lie down till they hear him shout "Hands up!" and then eight of them are to man the doors and windows. "Mind, not a soul stirs till I shout Hands up! and not a man fires till I do."

A few minutes elapse in expectation, and then two Boers appear on the neck 1000 yards away.

Sutty in his *kappie* and skirts emerges on to the stoep, puts a pail down, and trips back again; Fraulein Carstairs, sitting on the steps, gets up and goes inside. The brethren, reassured, canter down to the farm. The suppressed excitement is intense in the house. They pull up a few yards from it, hop off their horses, leaving the reins trailing, advance towards it, and run up the stoep.

"Hands up!" shouts Carstairs, and a dozen khaki hats with levelled rifles appear at the windows. Up fly the Boer hands without a moment's hesitation; the meaning of "hands up" is impressed clearly on the densest Boer mind.

Sutty and Carstairs, covering them with their revolvers, lead them half-dazed into an inner

room, with the order, "Keep them separate from the other two," and they are securely roped up and put by till Van Rensberg has time to try his persuasiveness on them.

Loyal George Van Rensberg, the son of an English mother, who proves the universal rule, to which there seemed no exception in this war, that the children of mixed marriages are true to the mother's race!

"Who's coming behind you, sonnie?" asks Suttty. "Commandant Fouché," replies one leather-breeched rogue. The plot thickens.

"Under cover every one," is the next order, and the tension becomes still sharper.

Ten minutes elapse. The horses of the two first-comers stand motionless, obedient to the trailing rein, which forbids movement. A cloud of dust rises close behind the nek. Once more the maidens on the stoep go through their parts, and a dozen Burghers canter down to the farm. Rensberg springs to the harmonium and strikes up the Volkslied.

Up canters the leader, a burly bearded man of some presence, fifty yards ahead of the others, jumps from his horse, runs up the stoep to the door, calling "Uit kom so, Anna." As he pushes open the door he is dealt a violent blow on the head by Suttty, and precipitated into the arms of two soldiers, who seize him and wrap his

head in a blanket, he cursing the while with a vocabulary worthy of an East-end docker.

Up sweep the rest of the party and begin to dismount, all save two, who ride on to the dam to water their horses, and two more a trifle behind the others. Eight are off their horses.

"Hands up, Burghers!" roars Carstairs. Up fly the hands once more before the levelled rifles, with the same ready alacrity. The two lads behind realise the situation, turn, and gallop off.

"Shoot those two!" cries Carstairs. "The men at the right window only to fire—remainder help Suttie secure the prisoners."

Half a dozen men open fire on the two lads, now over 200 yards away, one of whom drops as his horse, with a broken foreleg, gives way beneath him. Back turns his gallant comrade as the other struggles free, and in a moment the dismounted man is swung up beside the other. "Stout fellow," shouts Carstairs, "well done! Shoot the blighter if you can, boy; he's far too good a man to let free!" In guerilla warfare there must be no place for chivalry,—

"Though e'en the ranks of Tusculum could scarce forbear to cheer."

However, though the bullets splash and splutter

all round them, the pair, to every one's secret relief, get away, their sturdy mount making nothing of the double load.

"Humph," says Carstairs, throwing off his *kapjie*, "that blows the gaff at any rate; the sooner we are out of this the better."

By this time Suttý has secured the prisoners, nine more in all, and passes them into the house, where Rensberg is pumping the commandant. Half a dozen soldiers catch the ponies, and the company wag, free to let his tongue quack after hours of compulsory silence, asserts, "Strike me if I couldn't do some burgoo, or a pint o' four-half-'oo says a fizzer?"

The men from the kraal now bring up two more prisoners, the pair that had ridden off *viá* the dam, which makes the tally up to fifteen, including the commandant—a respectable day's work.

Carstairs now decides to slip away as sharp as possible, lest the escaped lads bring the whole commando, and perhaps Du Toit's as well, buzzing round him to effect a rescue.

"Sergeant Corcoran, get all the men mounted sharp. Three groups are to stay with me as rearguard, their horses to come to the house. Mount all the prisoners, take away their stirrups, each to have his horse led by one of the men;

you and Mr Suttly then slip away. Here, Suttly, you go with Sergeant Corcoran.

"Get those duds off you, men. The men of number one section to stay with me, number threes to bring up the horses. Keep the women in the rooms till we're gone.

"Corporal Jones, get that helio on to the next line of kopjies, where the road crosses the nek, and call up the column."

The men, nothing loath, are quick enough in getting their horses together and hoisting up the prisoners; for in ten minutes the whole party are off, the captured rifles slung over the backs of the number threes. From every haversack protrudes a loaf of Boer bread and a chunk of raw beef: bread is scarce on the veldt, and even the coarse Dutch loaf is worth having. "Beg yer pardon, sir; I can't get that column," says the signaller at the helio. He is told by Carstairs, who is posting his rearguard of nine, to keep calling up at intervals, and one of Suttly's native scouts is sent off at a gallop with a note to the column.

He was quite right not to let the men tarry, for ere the main party and prisoners are a quarter of a mile on their way a few Burghers appear on the nek, and as soon as they see the British trailing back, half a dozen come cantering towards the farm. The only consideration is to

gain time, so the rearguard rap out a couple of volleys and the brethren turn and gallop to the nearest sheltering gully.

"Shan't stop here long," mutters our subaltern, "or shall get hung up. Fire a shot at those beggars occasionally, Corporal Jones, just to keep 'em quiet."

He is quite right in his idea of the situation: before five minutes have elapsed the signaller watching for the friendly helio slips in to say, "Beg yer pardon, sir, I think some o' them Berjers is a-slipping round like." Right he is; for over the top of a roll in the veldt a dozen hats are visible, bobbing as their riders scuttle down a vlei. They had slipped over the kopje herring-bone farther along, and are riding hell-for-leather to a donga to cut off the rearguard.

"A pretty fine game," says Carstairs, who knew the donga, for Suttly had shown it him, as a useful under-feature, and sees that he has a chance to get there first. "Get mounted, every mother's son, and follow me," and then, turning to sour old *frau* Vander Walt, "So long, *oud missus*. *Hoe zegt oud President Brand, alles zal recht kom hein?*" ("What did old President Brand say—everything shall come right in time?"), for he had a pretty wit when the spirit moved him, and that was usually when matters were critical.

The old *Frau* must fain smile, as she vows that

he is a *mooi kerrel* (a good-looking lad), and, for all his trickery, far pleasanter to deal with than "that Rimington," as well she might, with a whole roof to her head.

The men fling themselves on to their horses from the back-stoop, and, following their subaltern at a gallop, are off like lightning. The points of a rearguard can't afford to be sticky.

Sutty and the main party, who had started off at a trot, the prisoners clinging to their pomels, are now a mile the home side of the debatable donga, which lies perhaps three-quarters of a mile from the farm, and to which now a dozen Boers and as many Britons are converging, like two trains at Clapham Junction, *quam celerrime*, and devil take the hindmost. For some hundreds of yards a rise in the ground hides them from each other; suddenly they come into mutual view, with 400 yards to the donga and as much between themselves. "Gallop like hell!" yells Carstairs. "*Schiet!* [shoot!] *Burghers, schiet!*" shouts the Boer *caporal*, and the farmers shoot from the saddle without slacking rein,—a disconcerting trick which our men had not acquired. Down goes a trooper, shot through knee and saddle to horse. The Burghers yell derision. Carstairs, seeing that neither party can gain the donga first, shouts, "Ride straight at the blighters!" and turns his own handy cob. Two Boers slip

from their horses and open magazine-fire; two more of the British are pitched forward as their horses give way beneath them.

Whrrr—whr-r-r—whr-r-r-r—phut! Whrrr-r—whr-r-r-r—phut!—whang two vicious shrapnel overhead, and two white balloons hang over the kraal, to which a score more Boers had galloped down from the nek. The column was up to time after all.

To the first scream of the shell, the farmers Carstairs is charging wheel about and scuttle for dear life back to their kopjies. Pom—pom—pom—pom from the timely column on the far ridge, phut—phut—phut among the brethren. "Pull up, d—n you! Get off and shoot!" shouts Carstairs to his breathless remnant, and the brethren are further hastened on their way by the contents of ten magazines, though no one seemed one penny the worse.

As Suttys party are now close under the guns of the column, the rearguard take stock of their losses in the donga: two horses killed, two men wounded, not seriously, and one horse wounded. The saddles are taken off the dead animals, and the dismounted men struggle off on foot, the remainder following slowly unmolested, extended to twenty paces. The brethren have disappeared, the artillery have ceased firing, and by the time Carstairs arrives the whole column has out-

spanned, and is watering at a dam hard by, absolutely secure on its kopjies, with a clear road back to camp in the afternoon.

The commander beams as Carstairs comes up to report. "Just picked you out of that in time, sonnie," says he. "You've done jolly well, and I shan't forget it. We shall get 'full congratulations' to-night. Next to George Brand, Fouché is the most important man in these parts. Come and feed."

So ended a red-letter day, of which there were none too many, even for the most fortunate of leaders. Of the many weary nights in the saddle, week in, week out, with never a success; of the many wild-goose chases, the many blank days, when patience gave out and tempers grew short, and the only part to contain a Boer was the ground just left, just as the days when the snipe is always behind you,—of such we will not speak. Still less need we dwell on the still worse day, when the Boer took tea with the Briton, and the "brother" fell top-dog, as fall he must at times; when draggled and footsore soldiers, clothed in sacking, straggled into the nearest post minus rifles, horses, and saddlery, and when the ambulance sallied out alone to ask for the dead and wounded, or, better, horse, foot, and artillery marched out in force to bury the dead they could not save.

"Dogged," however, "does it"; and the red-letter day, as it gradually became more frequent, finally brought us to the turn of the long lane, for

"Be the day short or be the day long,
At length it ringeth to evensong."

THE KEYS OF ALL THE CREEDS.

THE fining-pot for silver and the furnace for gold. This is the story of Jowand Singh, Subahdar of Artillery, a Sikh of the Sikhs, a soldier and ruler in the Khalsa, and how the sickle met the corn. Much honour and some solid position had he acquired in the Army of India, land and rank and title so far as the great British system has allowed its soldiers such. And, indeed, to the yeoman such as Jowand Singh the cup was reasonably full, or was so save in the still hours when the devil of ingratitude prompted him. At any rate, he was, as many of the yeoman soldiery who had served the Sirkar well, and who in their old age are scattered through the length and breadth of the Panjab, in some content.

Subahdar Jowand Singh Bahadur, A.D.C. to the King, a Sikh of the Manjha, had risen in a mountain battery of the Panjab Frontier Force from gunner to its highest grade, and had two rôles. In the one as a native officer of the battery he had been understudy to a British subaltern

of the Royal Regiment, and in his position as the *subahdar* and senior of the native officers as well as the wearer of all the war medals of his time he was guide, philosopher, and friend, so far as might be, to the officer commanding the battery. And both rôles he filled to success. But such a career did not fill the bill of life for him. Born a leader of men, and blessed with all the courage of his race, he had recognised and acquiesced in the great blank wall that the British policy has had perforce to raise between its finest native soldiers and a military career. A *sous-officier* he must remain, and that position had always seemed to him fit and proper. Now and again in his heart of hearts he had wished for more. His grandfather had been a *kommadan* in the army of the Khalsa, the colonel of a French-trained battalion that had stood up to a battalion of the British line at Ferozeshah and again at Chilianwalah, and had died a police magistrate under the English. His father had served in the Frontier Force, had been at the Bailey Guard with Wilde's Rifles, and had died a *resaldar*-major. Thus it came about that Jowand Singh, though a younger son, had land near Amritsar and a hereditary call in the Army, and his mother's father having been a *golandaz*¹ under the Patiala Rajah, he had become an

¹ *Golandaz*=artilleryman.

artilleryman, swearing the oath of allegiance with his right hand on a mountain-gun, after the custom of the Frontier Artillery. And the story of his career was a distinguished one. When George Swinley's two guns had been captured by a rush of fanatics on the Asmai Heights outside Kabul, it was Gunner Jowand Singh who had carried the two-hundred-pound gun of No. 3 Subdivision off the heights unaided, while Joshua Duke, the doctor, shot the green-turbaned fanatic who hacked at him, so that but two guns were the victor's tally. Then to Kandahar with Bobs marched he, and thence through Khorassan to garrison duty in the Derajat. There in the following autumn his battery took part in General Kennedy's Mahsud Waziree expedition, and many another, too, from that hardy annual, the Black Mountain, to Chitral and Tirah, and all the while his land in the Amritsar district grew more valuable, and his wife and sons farmed it better each year. Till at last as *subahdar* of his battery, with the Order of Merit gained on the Asmai Heights and that of British India conferred at the Jubilee, since lead he might never, he thought of power and place at home and such dominion as landed wealth might give.

And the manner in which he decided to retire came about in this way. The "Black Week" in

Africa was over. Methuen at Modder River and Buller on the Tugela still faced to their fronts, and while the Transatlantic cables ticked blue murder, and the lesser breeds on the Continent laughed, and General Staffs drew on their pigeon-holes, confidence throughout Hindostan was returning, for lo! the British were arranging other little wars. China and Ashantee and the Mahsuds were to be taught their place. And then the gossip in the lines and camps of the native Army had decided that the English were still worth serving, and that, as there were no more troops in England, of course the native Army must now go and help to straighten out these tiresome Boer-log. When, however, the summons to the Indian Army never came, and the Empire spawned and improvised soldiers of sorts so that the war should remain a white man's war, Jowand Singh came to me, his commanding officer. And this was the burden of his complaint: "When I joined the Army, sahib, we used case-shot and we had sharp swords, and the soldiers had peace half the day. Now we have strange guns and clinometers and magic sights, and we drill all day and half the night, so that we may be fit to meet the great white armies of the Sirkar's enemies. It is vexation, as you know, sahib, but we learn it to be good soldiers. Here now is all the English Army

used up, and yet, instead of letting us share in the glory, whom you have taught for years, we read that you are raising new troops while we eat our hearts out. Why is this, Great Presence?" But though I murmured of the greycoat guard on the Helmund Ford, and of the coming of the Bear, Jowand Singh would not be reassured; and who was I, that I could explain to him the mysteries of a white man's limited war, which had little of the *à outrance* about it, and which was really little more than a reading of the Riot Act in the nursery, for all its Majubas and pother. So he went away, holding that to tackle Mahsuds was his sole *métier*, and that the machine was over-geared for the job. But that was before the Gulf trade had turned the tribes on the frontier to a highly armed fraternity.

So it came about that in due course Jowand Singh passed to the retired list, or, to use the expressive Persian of the old Sikh Service, "to the list of those with the weary feet," leaving behind him a name and a tradition to be dinned into the ear of many generations of recruits. With him into retirement he took also a substantial grant of land on the new Chenab colony, land reclaimed from the desert by British engineers, which bore such cotton and wheat as had never yet been seen in the Panjab. There-

fore he increased in wealth and consideration in the countryside. But the prestige of the old soldier in the Panjab is not what it was. In the good days of shirt-sleeve government, the magistrate knew well that he rode at his ease only because of the armed men about him. The soldier stood for and behind the Government, and was the ready instrument to assist the civil authorities in getting in touch with the people. Now all that is much changed. It is not that "God is forgotten and the soldier slighted," but merely that as war and riot cease to be an ever-present problem, the arts of peace grow in the land and the soldier becomes one good servant among many, instead of the only one. The native officials of irrigation revenue and agricultural services, retired or serving, are more immediately useful to the Administration. Therefore Jowand Singh found that his position in the countryside, so far as its official recognition went, was not so high as his father's, the old Khalsa *kom-madan's*, which, to his eyes, meant that soldiering as a trade was losing caste. His sons were busy at school, and two were learning English, and precocious imps they had become. But their father believed that power and dominion went with the civil side of life, and so the fourth of the soldierly generation bade fair to change their rôle. Since high military prospects could not be

his, Jowand Singh, with his land and his prosperity and his fine bouquet of children, aimed at landed and local wealth and power. He listened to the voice of the Deputy Commissioner and sowed the best corn-seed and planted the best cotton, and got a better price from Ralli Brothers for his produce, and was made an honorary magistrate, so that some share of the power temporal came his way.

Then came to him emissaries of the Arya Samaj, preaching of temporal power for the twice-born, and of the horror that the Brahmin and the twice-born Hindu should be under the heel of the casteless English, and urged that one and all of the Hindus should mend their differences and combine to hold their own. How, too, those of Islam who had embraced the creed from the sword and might of the Mohammedan invader should be brought back to the fold, and that a Pan-Hinduism should rule the land of their fathers. But there was little here that appealed to the Sikh save that he would be admitted to power and place. It was as though the Church of Rome had preached to the Calvinist to come into the fold, so much does the strict, reformed, and primitive faith of the Sikh differ from the old Hinduism. Save only, however, in this way, that no man is born a Sikh; and till he, on approaching adult age, be baptised to

the strict religion, he is free to be brought up in the ease and permissible licence of popular Hinduism. In an age where the peace of the English has taken away fear, and the Sikh no longer faces the Mohammedan with his hand on his sword, the call to the simple militant creed of the Sikhs is weaker, till men say that but for the influence of the British officers in the Sikh regiments the old faith would die out. Half the simple earnestness of the Covenanter was due to the dragoons of Claverhouse. Persecution and the enemy at the gate have ever made for simplicity and directness. It takes a strong folk and a strong faith to maintain character in the face of prosperity.

To the old Sikh, with his family tradition of war, the lure of young Bengal has as yet little attraction. "The English beat us, and we and they beat the Poorbeahs; now who are the Bengalis that they should preach to men of the sword?—we still know our masters, with whom we share the Army." So when he talked it over with me as an old friend, the spirit of the Khalsa, which from a sect had become a soldiery of the Wallenstein type, rang out ruthless, forgetting the plough and the prize seed-corn. "Pah, Bengal!" quoth he; "if the English leave the country, we would see to it that there be neither a merchant nor a virgin left in Bengal

in a month." From which saying, again, I saw why India needs the English, chatter the B.A.'s never so wisely. The good English must keep the peace for the millions who cannot keep it for themselves.

It was only a year ago that I chatted with some Afghan friends settled within the British border for at least fifty years before that same border became British. "What," I asked, "would you do if the Sirkar left the land?" My friend was a civil officer of a sub-district who helped the English magistrate to preach trade and agriculture; with him was his younger brother, a *resaldar* in the 15th Cavalry; a third brother was also in the same regiment. "Ho! ho! sahib," laughed he. "What should we do, eh? I will tell you. Afzul here, and young Wali Dad, who is with his regiment, we should raise fifty of our own and our fathers' retainers, Alizais and Gandapurs, and we should ride straight for Bikaner." "Ah," said I in my ignorance, "why for Bikaner?" "Because," said my friend the benevolent magistrate, "in Bikaner city all the rich Hindu merchants keep their treasure." "Yes, indeed," said the cavalry brother, "and the Hindu *banniah* women are the finest in India." And once again I saw clear that a country of conflicting races and religions needs a rule that has at its back the drawn sword and the galloper gun.

All this, however, is by the way. The point is that Jowand Singh, honorary magistrate of the Amritsar district, saw perfectly well that, however much he and his desired power in the land, it was not to be got from combining with a folk whose hand had not kept their head this last thousand years. So he industriously and shrewdly pursued his business and left all hope of plunder of Bengal to the days when the English should have delivered it to the hands of his sons and the bad men of the northern hills. Why, only a mile from his own farm was the ruined fort of Dhulip Singh Allu-Waliah, which only seventy years ago had been taken and burnt by these same Afghans, who now never dare cross the line that the English had drawn at the foot of their hills.

But a year or so passed by and I had not heard of the old man, and the wave of unrest rolled on and a vast network of agitation had been engineered; so men began to say that only a killing could put the clock back. But there are better purposes to put men to than killing them, only it takes statesmen to do it when times are troublous. Then came a man from the north that I met up a valley in the Himalayas with a Castle Connel rod in his hand, and a Sikh orderly behind him carrying a scatter-gun on his shoulder and his master's sketching-

block, with whom I forgathered, both being from the Manjha; and this is what the master told me.

“Ah!” said he, “you’ve been out of touch with the Panjab, have you, for two years? Two years is a long time in these days. Faith! the country’s galloping. The Sikh, as you know, has had no mean opinion of himself these fifty years, and small blame to him. But you’ve had to cram the Army with him; no doubt you could not help it, . . . and he’s serving for much gelt half the world over. The people are badly above themselves,—not with disloyalty at present—not a bit; but they are in that dangerous state that they think we can’t do without them. Add to this the numbers that leave the Army after their short engagement, with some knowledge of affairs—for in these days the regimental bazaars talk over everything. Then the Sikhs of the trading classes, who can also make good soldiers, are bursting with knowledge and importance, and there are thousands more that have the English learning than you can ever employ in Government salary. Does it make for peace and quiet?—devil a bit. Then on the top of this comes this Pan-Hindu movement. Perhaps you remember what Henry Lawrence said, first after the Gwalior outbreak in ’43, when the Mahratta Army tried so hard to make

the Sikhs invade Hindostan, and again in '57: 'Never forget that the Sikhs are Hindus.'"

"Did you ever come across old Jowand Singh, of Jokh Buddhu?" said I.

"Did I not?" said he; "I know the old man well, and he is an instance of what is going on in some places. He is talking of injustice, and what have the English done for him and two of his boys; the two younger ones are being brought up as Hindus and not as Sikhs. He has become very wealthy, for his cotton and wheat sowing have been most successful, and he is becoming a power in the land. All the pensioners in the Chenab colony look to him for a lead and an opinion. The pleaders have got hold of him, too: he has taken to lawsuits and land cases like a fish to water, and has won several; and there is a pleader from Lahore always in his house."

"Well," said I, "this is news indeed; and what are Government doing?"

"Ah, well," said my acquaintance, "it is not much they can do; it is not a wind you can manage—it simply is so. They know all about it, and there are plenty of sound things done. It is the old story of sit tight and keep your powder dry; and we look for a man who can ride the storm. All may trend for the worst, or all may trend for the best. *'Le bon Dieu*

sait, moi je ne sais pas.' There is the same demand for decentralisation and shirt-sleeve government, but who can decentralise in these days of intricate up-to-date administration, with a democratic Government from Home trying to control a Government that must be autocratic? To go back to the old shirt-sleeve days and close personal touch means leisure, and that can only be done by doubling the *personnel*. Ah! we want a man—a man who knows and understands and can handle men, and who has incidentally some freedom of action."

And so we chatted on long into the night, and parted—he to spin for Mahseer, I to get a bag of *chikor*. But it was eight months before I had a chance to go and see Jowand Singh and find out for myself what leaven had been working. The leaven of John Hampden is strong meat for the East, and when I had last seen the old man the charm of the Sirkar still held him captive.

So up to the canal colony I went the next autumn, with a new gun for duck, and a pet old hammer-gun that had a way of its own for snipe, and put in a pretty week among the spill of the canals, till I began to touch the pensioners' colony. There was not much change to the open eye: old friends here and there turned up, and wherever I went there would be soldiers round the camp anxious to lend a hand—and it was

only in the sons, the young sons, that I saw signs of the times—satchels and English primers, and a firm resolution to tap a better trade than soldiering, despite the fact that the fat lands had come by way of the knapsack and its guerdon.

One day a white-bearded old man came to see me, to haver of Lumsden and Neville Chamberlain and the Bailey Guard, and the legends of a fading past; with him a grandson with a pen-box in his hand. And he struck the tone of lament: "What have I done, sahib, that this wretched creature should be grandson of mine? Who, too, will till the land?" quoth he. "Is the pen mightier than the plough?"—for to the old Sikh, the plough and mother earth come even before the sword. But when I asked if he knew Jowand Singh it was little I could hear, though one man said there had been much change.

The next day's march brought me to the vicinity of Jokh Buddhu, and people had more to say: Jowand Singh was a wonderful man, and the ways of God were wonderful. Then I came to a trunk road and sat me down by a newly built *serai* and drinking-fountain, with travellers' rest, and sat listening to the drowsy splash of the water. A cultivator came up with an ox to water, and passed the time of day: "A great man, Jowand Singh, a fine *serai* that

will be remembered many a day." "And who was Jowand Singh?" I asked. "Don't you know?" replied the peasant. "He that was *subahdar*, who got the best land when the water came, and made all the money, and was waxing fatter each day; now he builds wells and rest-houses wherever he hears they are wanted. He built this well last spring. It cost him four hundred rupees. Men say he has done it since the sickness."

Marvelling, I rode on and came to Jokh Buddhu. In the middle of the narrow village street I came to the massive lintel of deodar that formed the entrance to the old man's courtyard. A pile of old mealie-husks and a broken *charpoy* were the only tenants of a spacious court, in which half a dozen buffaloes and as many goats would usually be tethered. An ancient villager emerged from a house and remarked that the owner lived away in the fields. A small boy appeared and offered to lead me, and I followed him out across the thorn-hedges and the little canals for nearly a mile, past a cotton-field and a small copse. There, away from habitations, I found a small wattled hut, with a plastered threshing-floor, and two oxen unlawfully muzzled slowly tramped round the wheat in the ear, a comfortable elderly woman at the yoke.

Sitting on the edge of the wall round the threshing-floor sat the figure of a man whose frame I could not mistake. Tall and deep-chested as ever sat the *subahdar*, but the portly bulk was gone. Gone, too, were the fiercely curled whiskers and coal-black beard. It was a tall spare man with a flowing white beard who advanced to greet me, pleasure and greeting in his eye, as he led me into a neat plastered room in his hut, while the woman and the oxen trod the corn.

Ere the usual greetings of ceremony were ended the old man voiced the query in my mind, and his words were very near to those of the Preacher: "The fining-pot for silver and the furnace for gold; heaven for height and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings is unsearchable." "But when I last met you, Jowand Singh," said I, "you were landowner and a magistrate; how comes it that you have taken to this simple life? Do 'the strong men bow themselves and the grinders cease because they are few'? Is all vanity?"

"Sahib," said the old Sikh, "you and I have spent years of sunshine and storm together, *kubhi sukh kubhi dukh*,¹ and I will tell you. You know the family from which I come, and how in reward for my services the Sirkar gave me

¹ Sometimes pleasure sometimes pain.

canal land, and the *jangal wallah* sahib taught me to buy good English seed for wheat and cotton, and how I yearly made more money, and the Sirkar made me a magistrate and a *Rai sahib*¹ as well as a *Sirdar bahadur*.¹ And then you may have heard how I listened to the pleaders and the Aryas, and came to think that I had not half my deserts, and that the English oppressed us and despised us, and meant to treat us like children to the end of all time. When it became known that I thought thus, *jogis* and *sunnyassis* came to my house, and sea-lawyer pensioners from the upper Chenab, and we sat and talked of the days when the Khalsa should be revived, and the Hindus should be paramount, and the Mohammedans should be our slaves, and there should be no more English and no more law courts. I have seen the English go to Kabul as easily as I go to market, and have known the English as son to father; but I listened, for the tongues of priests are silken, and subscribed to their funds, too, for my pains. And then came a day when my wife came back from market, where she had been with her brother, and was ill of fever, and for four days I nursed her, and I, too, fell ill; and then the people said we had the plague, and the *hakim* would not come and the servants ran away, and

¹ Titles of honour.

we were left alone; and then I said, 'We will away to the fields to die.' Out to the fields we managed to creep, my wife and I, hand in hand to this *tope* near by. I brought with me a sharp knife, I don't know why; and then I remembered what a sahib had said at Bannu, who had been at Hong-kong when the plague was there. He had told us how a Chinaman had saved many people by opening the swellings under the armpit with a razor. So I crawled to my wife and dug this knife into the swelling under her arm, and made her do the same to me. And then, after lying in the fields, the fever left us, and I caught a goat and milked it, and we lived.

"And so it came about that we both got stronger, and we would not go back to live with those who had left us; but I built this hut here, and here we live. I have a *vakeel*¹ to manage my land. But now I know that all is vanity, and I spend my money on the things that matter."

So I spoke of the well and travellers' *serai* that I had seen. "Ah!" said he. "Yes, you have heard? To all who want it I bring water; the bridegroom water to the bride earth, and the sun above; and the earth brings forth, and the children grow fat, and all is peace. I have washed my hands in many rivers, but now I have forgotten all things, . . . the old battery,

¹ *Vakeel* = agent.

and the mountain-gun, my Order of British India, the rush on the frontier, what *vakeels* think of the Sirkar, and whether there be Hindus, and whether there be Mussalman and a hundred names of God, or whether the English shall rule the Khalsa. . . . All I know is that I and my wife are alive, and that it has pleased the Creator to give us life and content. Health and peace and the happiness of others, and the rest is vanity.

‘Mankind belongs to God,
And the land to the Sirkar,
And power to the mighty sahibs.’”

And with this village saying the old man sat down, and his placid wife brought milk and chapaties, and I felt that I had heard the conclusion of the whole matter.

PEREUNT ET IMPUTANTUR.

WHETHER or not General Buonaparte actually poisoned his wounded at Acre and Mount Carmel, lest they should fall into the hands of their ruthless enemies, is one of the controversies of history. An equally moot-point is his right, or that of any man, thus to anticipate the workings of Providence.

The following tragedy involves the same controversy: while of its truth there are but two vouchers, the grey hairs in the head of the officer concerned, and the memory of Dip Bahadur Gurung, the orderly—but he saw nothing unusual in the incident.

Away up above the Third Defile of the great Irrawaddi in the province of Upper Burma, a small cloud had appeared on the peaceful horizon, at a time when the melting of the snows had so blocked that defile that the Government launches could not ply between the larger military posts and the small, detached garrisons up the river. The *Freebooter*, the *Scout*, and the *Pirate* dare

not breast the rush of water in the gorges, where the *Buccaneer* already lay at the bottom from an over-rash attempt to get through the defile last fall with medical stores. So from the month of May, when the waters rose, to late in the autumn after the rains, the troops up-river were quite isolated, and it was a season in which the Government and all reasonable tribes abstained from hostile acts.

It was no wonder, then, that the authorities were much concerned, when news arrived that a pretender to the throne of Burma had crossed the frontier of China, and was making war against the British. A prince of the blood, forsooth, had appeared, with proclamation and peacock banner, with forty Chinese black flags, and a score or so of Burman wolves' heads harboured in the State of Sansi. Now, a prince of the blood was no new thing in Burma, or a princess and maid of honour either, for that matter, since the blood of Thebaw ran in as many channels as that of the Stuarts and the Bourbons, and of titular claimants there was no end; but Burman Perkin Warbecks, on the Upper Defile, with the river swollen and the rains approaching, called for immediate action, lest a real rebellion should follow. Since an army at that time of year could not be sent to grapple with the pretender, the subaltern in charge of the nearest Military

Police post would have to go instead, and if he fail, why then something else must be done; but in those days there was much confidence in the capacities of police subalterns to deal with minor crises.

The following telegram, therefore, arrived one May morning at the Military Police post of Tālī from the civil Commissioner of the division:—

To the Officer Commanding at Tālī.

The Shwedon prince, with Boh Htee, and Boh Wasaw, and twenty Chinese, armed with Remingtons, were at Waimone two days ago, endeavouring to stir up the Shans (*stop*). The Wuntho Tsawbwa, with two elephants, is reported coming south to join him (*stop*). Try to capture the prince before he gets a following (*stop*). You will be reinforced to-night by Lieutenant Reeve and thirty men of the Tsenbo Battalion in the launch *Pathfinder*.

Clear instructions, and simple enough in all conscience, putting the burden of failure on the subaltern, and leaving plenty of bricks to be made without any mention of straw; a perfectly satisfactory arrangement, however, to the officer concerned, who, coming from a smart native regiment to seek retrenchment and a district where the Queen's writ ran but slowly, had developed a craving for responsibility, and a love and much aptitude for the rough-and-tumble soldiering in the Burmese jungles.

To our subaltern, James of the Levy, late of

Hearsey's Horse, and better known in Hindostan as "Jimjams," the proximity of the filibustering prince was already known, and his interpreter and a couple of Jharua scouts had been despatched the previous night to get ken of him. Pending their return, the only thing was to take stock of and mobilise the available garrison. Fifty-seven Goorkha and Jharua rifles of the Levy, ten Sikh mounted infantrymen, with a hospital assistant, two signallers of a Madras infantry regiment, and a telegraph babu, comprised the sum-total of the force, to which might be added five pack-mules and a couple of mule-teers — not much to engineer a Culloden on, even with the expected reinforcements on the *Pathfinder* thrown in!

The total force available when the launch had arrived would not be more than seventy rifles, since the post, the usual sapling stockade, with fringe of bamboo *pangies*¹ and shallow ditch, had five months' rations stored, and could not well be deserted. Three only of the five mules were fit to be saddled, and these would carry a pair of 80-lb. flour-sacks — two scant half-rations per man — two boxes of reserve rifle ammunition, and the third would just take one waterproof sheet between two men, and a couple of blankets for the white officers, — a slight concession to the

¹ *Pangies* = spikes.

value not only of the white man because of his colour, but to the necessity of nursing the head-piece: a necessity sometimes overlooked in excess of zeal. Every man would have to carry his cloak *en banderole*, and sixty rounds of Snider ammunition, a wound from which meant a real business wound, and not a ten days' imitation, allowing the victim to return to take part in the next fight.

At noon the *Pathfinder* hove in sight round a bend in the river, chunking hard against the swollen current, the soldiery squatting on her decks, and her tripod Nordenfelt, the pride of her Mugh *seraing*,¹ glinting in her bows. Full four hundred yards above the Tāli landing-ghaut she struggled up-stream, and then swept down on the flood to the steep bank, deftly avoiding two huge snags, and cleverly sidling alongside at the exact spot, much to the admiration of a row of Shan girls, who, squatting above, smoking the inevitable cheroot, were thoroughly enjoying the proceedings. On the tiny bridge stood Reeve, and by nature reiver, clad, after the fashion of the Irrawaddi, in short loose breeches of blue Shan silk, and khaki jacket atop, and by him a Pathan native officer. "Hulloa, old man, Jim-jams!" shouted he; "what's up now?" "You come ashore, young feller," returns James, "and

¹ *Seraing*=skipper.

I'll tell you. Big thing this. Biggest thing in Upper Burma." And the two leaders then held a conference full of sound ideas lightened with the chaff that is inseparable from the British subaltern, even in the gravest crisis. Soon after the conference the two scouts came back with fairly ample news; twenty miles and more had they been to the Shan Talok village of Sadon Pa, under the peak of Kumpi Pum, where they had found much to do, for the Shwedon prince had passed through the night previous, and had carried off six maids of the village. The *thugyi* (headman) had objected, and now hung crucified for his pains; and the mother of one of the girls who had dared protest had been hung up by the hair to a tree, sprinkled with kerosene, and then set alight, amid the jeers of the pretender's army. The poor Shan Taloks, the most peaceful and industrious of our new subjects, had asked pitifully if the great English Queen allowed such doings, and the interpreter had taken on himself in the sahib's name to promise full vengeance. Further and most vital information was to this effect, that the prince and his followers, who numbered about two hundred, had moved to another Shan Talok village, some seven miles on, named Namli, and were said to be waiting there till the Yawyin tribes had joined them, and that a dozen maids of that village had

been requisitioned by them, which no man dared resist, therefore they prayed the Thakins to come quickly to their rescue.

Now Namli village lay a good three-and-twenty English miles to the south-east of Tāli, through the steep gorge of the Karee Chaung and over the ridge of the sister Pums, as hard a track as man could wish to climb; but still within reach before the next morning to troops as hard and fit as the men of the Levy, provided they lost no time in getting away.

James was a man of action, and Reeve was eager as a terrier, so in an hour's time the little force was paraded outside the stockade—fifty men of the Levy, twenty Sikhs of Reeve's lot, three mules, and the doctor babu, who was to ride the mules by turns atop of their actual loads, every man with his cloak and as much rice and chapaties as his haversack would hold.

As they were parading, a telegram arrived from the Commissioner to say, "The General hopes you will be very careful; no reinforcements can be sent to you for some weeks." "Silly old bird," remarks the irrepressible Reeve; "nice of him to cheer us up." The more tactful James, however, despatched a reassuring message to say that he would observe the greatest caution, remarking that it was high time the enemy cut the wires. Not the first commander by any

means to utter such a wish, nor the first to have ready agents to "rid me of this turbulent—telegraph."

At the last moment, on the suggestion of a native officer, the route is changed, and the men are packed into three large *talaungs* with Shan rowers, by which some six miles of the road might be accomplished without fatigue to the footmen, by rowing three miles down-stream and four up the Karee Chaung, the ten mounted men and the mules going by road to meet them. By this means, too, the villagers of Tālī would not know the route taken till the column was some miles on the road.

As they were starting another telegram arrived, this time from an officer commanding a police battalion up-river, and calculated entirely to counteract the effect of the General's message. And it ran thus: "Good old Jimjams, ride straight at him; am coming after you as soon as I can raise some men; send *Pathfinder* up here."

By three in the afternoon the boats were dropping down-stream at a good five miles an hour, the Goorkhas and Sikhs in the best of spirits, the officers in the leading *talaung* busy examining the very meagre maps of the districts and cross-questioning guides. Fortunately, a native officer had been to Namli by that route a couple of years before with a boundary survey, what

time the Chinese had overrun the frontier and blown up our boundary pillars. After half an hour's run down-stream, the flotilla swung round a bend by a big reed-grown sandbank into the mouth of the Karee Chaung. Then it commenced to pole up-stream, past piled village and fertile rice-flats, feeding ibis and fighting wild-duck, till some four miles from the Irrawaddi the leading boat stuck on the sand, and they saw the mounted infantry, ten bearded Sikhs, waiting for them on the bank. Five minutes sufficed to disembark the expedition, and five more to get it under weigh, the mounted infantry in advance till dark. Seventeen miles had to be covered, seventeen remarkably stiff miles, too, for the road was already ascending, and nothing but a goat-track at that. James intended to push along for some ten miles till he reached the second crossing of the Karee stream, somewhere about 8 P.M., and there to halt for a few hours till the moon rose, ere he ventured into the tangled paths in the bamboo jungle that fringed the lower slopes of the eastern hills above the stream.

Away trotted the ten Sikh horsemen, to gain two or three hundred yards' start; after them trudged the sturdy stuggy Goorkha footmen, eternally chaffing the solemn long-legged Sikhs of Reeve's party, who brought up the rear in

dignified silence, till the white officers bade the chattering Mongolians cease their clavers also. Behind followed the three mules, with the unhappy doctor babu jogging and jolting on the leader.

Through bamboo-thicket and teak-forest the road took them, ever in single file, past cool silver streams and sour acrid marsh, to the chagrin of the huge coulon in their evening feed; up into rocky defiles, where the orchids hung on the trees in glorious pendants; through wattle villages, where the villagers yelped delight; and on over the wooded col, till again the path dropped as the sun went down, towards the grey shade and the cobalt mist of the Karee valley, to the fighting teal and the shrill whistling of the bamboo partridge.

Shortly before eight o'clock, as the last streak of the day was disappearing in the haze of the valley, the little column reached the Shan village of Heylon, and as it swung into the hamlet it shied visibly at three ominous shapes that stood out clear against the sky.

Three St Andrew's crosses were silhouetted in the night air, and on them hung three dead Shan Taloks, of whom one was the *thugyi* of the village, and another was a wretched old woman, some poor scolding old body who had dared raise a quivering voice against the prince's

raiding dacoits. Accustomed as is the native mind to ideas of tyranny and bloodshed, even the Goorkhas cursed to see the sight, and the two English wardens of the frontier swore silently into their beards that the Shwedon prince should pay a fair and true reckoning for his piracy.

In the village, whose inhabitants had fled to the jungles, and small wonder, it was decided to halt in the company of the poor victims till the moon rose; and the sepoy's munch their chapaties and rice, and have the last sleep they were likely to get for many a weary hour. The party dozed in a sort of a square round two isolated houses at the far end of the village, well removed from the three gruesome crosses, and the most defensible point, at which also a Cossack post was established, covering the approach from the east.

At midnight it was proposed to start again and try to cover the seven miles to Namli by 4 A.M.; dawn would not be till five.

At 11 P.M. the moon rose over the jagged tops of the bamboo jungle covering the hillside opposite, waning, but still strong and powerful; and James, peering round his bivouac, could see the round cap of his sentry sharp against it as it rose, standing out from the shadow of the long log-house that concealed him.

Hardly had the moon cleared the tops of the bamboos, when the light swish of a pair of grass-

shoes could be heard coming down the rocky path opposite and splashing through the stream. James slipped across to his sentry and roused the two men of the relief: as he did so a Shan, haggard and drawn in the moonlight, dragged himself up the rise from the ford, stretching out before him a bleeding arm from which the hand had been lopped. No need for the levelled bayonet of the sentry, or a spring by the rest of the piquet; the poor wretch's murmur of relief on seeing the British showed clearly enough whence he had come, and while the doctor babu dressed his stump, his tale was unfolded to the two officers. A right valuable tale it was, too, as ever came to a leader seeking intelligence of his adversary, for the Shan was son to the Thugyi of Namli, and had been sent forth the last evening by a bypath to fetch such aid as he could from any village that dare resist the prince, and if possible warn the British. A raiding party of the intruders had come on him unexpectedly, and deeming him a straggler from the village, had cut off his hand merely in their light-heartedness, as a warning against straying from home. After which he had struggled on to the Karee Chaung, and this was what he knew of the enemy. The main body, now some four hundred strong, for some Yawwysins and three Kachin Tsawbwaws had joined them, lay in the

village of Namli, occupying the houses and doing as they pleased. The prince and several of the Bohs, with their immediate following, lay, however, in the Thugyi's house, which stood apart from the village, some two hundred yards on the hither side, along the narrow spur which jutted out from the main ridge. Further, a piquet, furnished by the Kachins of the Sakongwa, was posted a bit lower down the spur behind a stockade made by forced labour from the village that afternoon. He himself had been sent by his father in charge of the tally of villagers for the *corvée*.

A moment's reflection showed James that chance had given him an opportunity he had hardly dared hope for: could he but pass the piquet he might secure the prince and the Bohs, and get them away with the mounted infantry before he need deal with the main body or fear a rescue from them. How to surprise the piquet of Kachins was the problem, for the Shan said that the jungle round the spur was too thick to be traversed, while the noise of men passing through it would be bound to attract attention: the Kachins, however, had looted all the village supply of *shumshu*,¹ and might well be sleeping. He himself was none too weary for revenge, and if he might sleep for half an hour would gladly guide them. The

¹ A fiery beer brewed from rice.

scheme of surprising the piquet was far too promising to be neglected, and the whole lie of the pretender's bivouac was more than propitious, so in half an hour the little party was ready to move off.

The ponies of the mounted infantry had been fed on the young bamboo leaves and a handful of unhusked rice from a hut hard by, and the men had had a good meal, while Reeve produces his whisky-flask and insists on James taking a pull of the wine of the country to keep the fever out. The general scheme is explained to the native officers, and some suggestions by one of the Goorkhas adopted, and the party tramps off,—no advanced-guard this time, since touch might be lost,—the mounted men in rear, James, the Shan, and four Goorkhas leading, and nothing but the broken shadows in the moonlight to show that a movement was afoot. Seven miles of broken track by night is a weary march, and it was not till close on 4 A.M. that the guide indicated that they were at the bottom of the spur leading up to Namli.

Here the leader halted his party, to close up and generally get ready for the final act,—final, at any rate, for some of them—for the Burman if caught in a trap can turn and fight, ay, and sting too, like many another folk the British army wots of, who have no stomach for a

stand-up fight unless the odds are more than favourable. But it is always the lot of the junior officers, who keep watch and ward on the marches that follow the sun in its course, to have to lay the odds, and thus to tackle a calculating foe; for no nation expects more bricks for less straw than shopkeeping England, though, unlike Pharaoh of old, she gets little murmuring from her slaves. For a miserable pittance they give work that gold cannot buy, and take many a hazard that prudence and the laws of chance forbid, . . . and win, or fall to the tormentors of the halfpenny press.

With some such thoughts as these, then, James of the Levy cast about in his mind how he might win the hazard: the burden of responsibility, that breaks so many gallant hearts, heavy on him, and his mind vexed with the many pros and cons that fate sends to weaken determination. It is not many men that can face desperate responsibility unmoved, as good leaders know right well, and keep their knowledge to themselves.

Round the leader squatted the Goorkhas as they straggled up, cheery and eager, like terriers round a rabbit-warren, void of imaginations, and blindly confident in their officer of an alien race. Behind them closed the Sikhs and the trusty Reeve, eager for blood, uncursed with

nerves, and free from any responsibility save that of loyal support, a very swashbuckler of the best class. Who could ask for better men, or not agree with gallant Henry that the fewer men the more honour? So James of the Levy took heart of grace, as he glanced at the squat, eager, almond-eyed faces of Magar and Gurung, and the steadfast impassive visages of the yeomen Jats, and reflected that, big or small, he would chew the chunk, and give his men a run for their money, come weal come woe, like the hearty John Bull he was.

Four A.M. and an hour of precious night remaining, as the raiders swung up the hill spur, and tripped and cursed as they scrambled over the rocks that had forced their way through the skin of the hillside. In the valley below a barking deer was coughing itself awake, and the village cocks had already commenced their *réveillé*. Up the last eight hundred feet of rock and bamboo scrub struggled the British, the sharp, uncanny morning breeze caressing their faces, and compressing their hearts and lungs, four cat-like Goorkhas leading, kookri in hand, and then the resolute Jimjams. Beside the latter, a rope round his waist lest he play them false, and at the other end of it another of the Mongolian fraternity, with ready bayonet, marched, little loath, the unfortunate armless

Shan, who had already intimated that the Kachin piquet must be near by. The moon had sunk, and the waving ragged bamboos blotted out the faint indication of approaching dawn, when from the gloom ahead came a shout and a curse from the leading point, who had stumbled over the prone body of a sleeping man.

"*Bahut i dushman raste men sote hain,*" came back the cry (Many of the enemy are sleeping in the path), and straightway instinctively the four leading scouts rushed on the sleeping piquet, followed by James and those close behind him, tumbling over each other and throwing themselves on any of the enemy visible, as they struggled up from their beery sleep. A wild rough-and-tumble ensued, kookri and dah, bayonet and matchlock rifle-butt to Tower musket. British hands on Burman throats, scratch and bite and scuffle; stabbing knife and stunning club, while the bamboos waved against the lightening east, and the cocks crowed louder to wake a sluggard force, and all the while the file of British swarmed up the path to watch an almost silent struggle in the grass that fringed the path.

A dozen couples rolled on the ground, and it was too dark to tell friend from foe. James was atop of a powerful Kachin, whom he was trying to strangle, while the other tore at his

tightly screwed eyes, till a Goorkha near him stabbed his own man, and then did the same for his leader; another had clean hacked the head from his adversary, and was wiping the blade on his victim's shirt, for a Goorkha loves his weapon; three or four more had hammered their men to silence, and were tying them up, and a few still struggled together.

In the middle of the hurley-burley a huge fat Kachin, the Boh of the party, had wrenched himself free from two men who had seized him, and in a wild frenzy was whirling himself round and round, a long keen Chinese sword in his hand, and already had severely wounded a couple of Goorkhas, while in the grey dusk it was hard to get near him. At this moment Reeve and his Sikhs came up with bayonets fixed. "A damned dangerous fellow!" quoth he, and promptly three long-armed Singhs drove their bayonets into his ample paunch, which practically finished that piquet.

Fortunately not a shot had been fired, and the struggle in the dark had been too sudden and sharp to allow of much shouting, so that as the British straightened themselves out and secured the prisoners, James hoped he might still secure the prince, whom the guide declared was in a house a hundred yards or so farther along the spur. James, with twenty or thirty men, hurried

on, bidding Reeve follow with the remainder, and in five minutes more had surrounded the huge bamboo hut, hung with horns and skulls, as becomes a headman's residence. Up the ladder and into the front room burst the raiders, and found it, as was expected, full of sleeping forms. Half were secured before they could free themselves from their blankets, several jumped from a backdoor into the arms of the British below, and four or five showed fight in a corner, like rats in a hole. The Goorkhas and Sikhs had now seen blood, and recked little of desperate men, who were soon overpowered and bayoneted; not however before, unfortunately, one of them had discharged a horse-pistol in a havildar's face, and another emptied a Belgian revolver into our ranks, so that three of our men were down, and the alarm given once and for all. In the village, a hundred yards away, the angry hum of men could be heard, and already stray shots were dropping by the headman's house.

"Take the prisoners away at once with the mounted infantry, Reeve, old man," shouts James, "while I hold the end of the village; make straight for home, and never mind me." Then, to the Pathan native officer, "Get the wounded away at once; leave the dead where they lie; use the mules, and take ten of the Sikhs with you." He then hurried to seize, if

possible, the nearest house to that in which the capture had been made, whence to cover the withdrawal with the prizes. He could not hope to tackle the whole gathering without risking unduly the safety of the prisoners, and he could not bring himself to slaughter the latter so long as there was any hope of getting them away as prisoners. Therefore it was that he and some forty men found themselves holding the two end houses of the village and firing down the street, for it was built along the crest of a narrow spur, in the endeavour to keep back the angry crowd that surged up from out the huts and from their bivouacs on the hillside. Away behind, Reeve was bustling off his prisoners,—seven notables, and the captured Kachins of the piquet as well,—and of these five were perched on captured ponies, their legs tied beneath them, and the remainder aided down the hill on foot by the moral suasion of insistent bayonet points.

Five dead rebels lay in the house, and as these might well be wolves'-heads and men of note, for whose capture or certified destruction a Government reward had probably been proclaimed, it was only fair to the authorities, and the troops concerned in the capture, that there should be no doubt about the matter. Accordingly an expert Goorkha whipped off their heads, which were stowed in a sack for identification

by the nearest civil officer,—a lamentable act, but one absolutely necessary where the peace and welfare of the border-side depends on the removal, beyond dispute, of the outlaws who “shoot at the strong and slash at the weak,” out of pure spite for the ruling power.

When a whole corpse cannot be presented for identification by the crowner, it is good enough on the Eastern Marches to produce the head, so that, reassured at the sightless grin, the merchant, the shepherd, and the farmer may once more resume their work in peace and security; and who shall criticise the local wardens for their action? What was good enough for the gallant misguided English gentlemen who joined the Young Pretender, and whose skulls whitened for many a year on the gates of London, scarce a century and a half ago, was good enough for the pretender's following who tortured and robbed for personal gain on the shores of the Irrawaddi.

While Reeve, then, was securing prisoners and scalps, and the Pathan native officer was hiding the British dead and lifting the wounded away down the hill, James was being involved in the most desperate of rearguard imbroglios, from which the prospects of easy withdrawal grew momentarily dimmer. And all the while the east grew brighter, and the stars faded, and

the cool wind played on the orchid blossoms that dropped from the trees, as if Bohs and pretenders, dacoits and soldiers, with their evil accessories of rifle and dah, headless corpse and crucified villager, had never trespassed in so fair a garden. The sun shines happily on God's earth, and the flowers bloom to the raiding insect, regardless of man's evil, yesterday, to-day, and for ever, as it shone on Saxon and Norman by the hoar apple-tree on the bare ridge of Sussex Senlac in bright English September; on the piled heaps of red and blue in the vineyards on the Two Arapeiles; or on the horror in the plaisaunce of Hougomont in the haze of a mid-summer day,—and as it must shine on many a stricken field yet in the world's history.

For half an hour the rebels had contented themselves with firing at the rearguard from the cover of the hillsides, at some two hundred yards' range, and with beating gongs to encourage each other; but now realising that the party they had to deal with was but a handful, they were closing in and moving round the lower slopes of the spur. A lighted arrow had set one of the huts on fire, and forty or fifty men with dahs were endeavouring to close with some Sikhs on James's right: a couple of men were lying dead, half a dozen had been wounded, though none seriously, and a havildar had re-

turned to report that the prisoners and the wounded were now well on their way down the hill. Now was the moment to retire, and under cover of a rush on the enemy, who were trying to get to close quarters, the party scurried back to the headman's house, till they were joined by the handful that had made the counter-attack. After them poured the exultant enemy, slashing at the two bodies that had been abandoned, and snapping muskets and matchlocks that fired hammered iron slugs, and now and again a whizzing Remington bullet.

A further retreat was ordered to the brow of the ridge, where the piquet had been surprised a short hour before; and here James decided to hang on for a half-hour more, to give Reeve plenty of law, and then to make his way clear away as best he could. In this further withdrawal another man presumed dead had had to be abandoned, and to his horror he saw that a man, evidently wounded as the dart back had commenced, had been left behind, and was being hauled away by four Chinamen, out of sight into the jungle, with every prospect of death by torture before him; and since the good of the greater number must ever in war be weighed against the safety of the individual, an attempt at rescue was evidently out of the question, as James had to acknowledge to himself. Now

this is a point which chivalrous men are apt to forget in war, and only when a costly rescue is a necessity, for the maintenance of *morale*, should it be attempted. Medical officers, who so gallantly expose themselves to dress wounded under fire, should realise the grave folly they are committing in jeopardising the welfare of the numbers they minister to, by risking their lives for the benefit of the one.

So, with deep burning rage in his heart and a red-hot carbine in his hand, James and his remnant once more settled down in the bamboo-grass, cuddling their war-worn Sniders, and muttering to their sharpened kookris and long triangular bayonets, ready enough for the appeal to steel when the diminishing cartridge store finally ran out, as it was bound to do ere long. He soon saw that the yelling, furious crowd, however so much they shirked cold metal at short quarters, were steadily working round his flanks, and that his next move back would mean running the gauntlet through an alleyway of assorted firearms. Fifteen minutes of his allotted endurance had passed, and he ordered back down the hillside half his men, who carried two badly wounded men with them, and with whom were all of the slightly wounded. They were to pull up some four hundred yards on, and wait for him to withdraw to them. Down the path they

scrambled reluctantly, for their blood now recked of little, and surged with the lust of battle. But James knew well enough that a useless waste of life was no part of a soldier's business, and that *La Gloire* had been many a man's ruin, so off they had to go,—glory to the Sirkar, and victory to the Khalsa, and every other warlike sentiment notwithstanding, howl the enemy never so derisively,—while James himself, with Ghurruck Singh, the grey-bearded old Sikh subahdar, and a round dozen of Singhs and Thappas, kept the path behind them, as Horatius kept the bridge of old. Ghurruck Singh spat and swore deep into his beard, a dead man's Snider in his hand; and the Sikhs stood up and fought regardless of exposure, like the stubborn, slow-witted yeomen they are, quiet in attack and dogged in defence, fighting with that majesty that Napier ascribes to the British soldier of the old line. And among their legs in the grass and between the rocks the Goorkhas crouched invisible, and fired away steadily into the jungle, though little enough of their enemy could they see. Thus slowly James drew his party off, snarling and biting, by knots and clusters, pushing his wounded on before him. And all the while the enemy buzzed round, rarely visible, constantly firing, and ever and anon rushing^d in to club some unfortunate who

had fallen behind unseen. But at last, through much weariness, the lust for fight in the men's hearts gave place to the lust for life, as must ever happen with the best of human soldiers, and the rear party dwindled, through men slinking off to join those in front, till but six remained. With them, unfortunately, were two badly wounded men—gallant old Ghurruck Singh, who weighed fourteen stone, and a Goorkha,—and an attempt to carry them a few yards had shown that, unless they were abandoned, the whole party must be cut up. Already the enemy were closing round and mustering courage for a rush in, and James had to face the alternative of leaving them to a horrible fate or sacrifice the entire party. Dip Bahadur Gurung, his orderly, spoke softly to him, and James nodded his acquiescence.

A sharp order sent five of the survivors doubling back through the tufts of tall flowery pampas grass that covered the banks of a stream they were approaching, with orders to cross and wait on the opposite bank, so that James and Dip Bahadur, his orderly, stood alone facing the enemy beside the two sore wounded men. The old Sikh groaned, tried to rise, and fell back heavily; a partridge piped in the jungle hard by, and two Kachins peered round a fallen teak-tree and fired at the group. James looked at

the orderly and nodded, placed his revolver to the native officer's head, fired, and Dip Bahadur did the same with his Snider to the wounded Goorkha. . . . The two then by one common impulse leapt towards the crouching Kachins by the tree-trunk, and shot them both ere they recovered from their surprise; and then plunged into the mass of pampas grass in the wake of the rest of the men, Dip Bahadur unconcerned enough, but James with a wild set look that he was not to lose for many a day, and which will return to him whenever his memory stirs, till he too goes to join brave old Ghurruck Singh with those who die for duty's sake.

Further it is not necessary to follow the weary homeward way, save to say that, by the village of the crucifixion, where the expedition had halted on the Karee Chaung the night before, Reeve and his party were waiting for the rear-guard, which was gradually joining him in small groups, as they struggled up with empty pouches and limping wounded, till at last James and Dip Bahadur turned up too, and reported that the pursuit had gradually died away after the last stream had been crossed. Here a halt was made for a couple of hours, and the roll called, with a resulting deficit of thirteen on the full tally; and against this seven notable prisoners, including the reiving prince who had thought to rival

the Sirkar, five common Kachin villagers of the piquet, and a possible gold-mine in the sack of unidentified heads. At which result Reever was proportionately elated, and much concerned at James's taciturnity, an attitude which to this day he cannot account for.

Late that evening, when the sun had died away below the jade-mines' hills, the British cavalcade, weary to dropping, and quietly exultant, filed into the parade-ground outside the Tāli post, and there they found the *Pathfinder* with two *loungs* in tow, and men of the 'Nsentaru Battalion disembarking, to the number of two strong companies. A telegram was also waiting from the Commissioner to say, "You are not to start till Captain Crowhurst arrives from 'Nsentaru, to take command with two hundred more men — acknowledge," and Crowhurst, keenly disappointed at being too late, could only say "Good old Jimjams!" — a remark very similar to that which arrived, framed in more official language, from the Chief Commissioner and the General at Mandalay the next morning; to be followed in due course with more substantial recognition, for in addition to the capture the whole gathering was found to have dispersed when the larger force moved out.

And now James, late Jimjams of Hearsey's Horse, and some time James of the Levy, is

Major James, D.S.O., and second in command of that same incomparable regiment of Silladar horse, and as fine a soldier as ever wore the dress of the Silladar Cavalry, which is saying a good deal; but though his brother officers like and respect him, they can trace little resemblance between the cheery rowdy Jimjams whom they sent off in their best style to Burma to save money and escape his creditors, and the serious zealot who now lives for his profession alone.

In Major James's bungalow, beside the gun-rack and the tally of polo-sticks, hangs a heavily embroidered peacock banner, "stiff with gold but stiffer with gore," and under it a photograph of a handsome old Sikh sirdar of the old school, on which is written a date, and the old dog-Latin couplet from the sun-dial in the old garden on the Ranworth broads; the epitaph of the hours that pass and the beasts that perish, not unrecorded—" . . . *Pereunt et imputantur.* May 17th, 189 . . . "

AN OLD FRONTIER.

So many of the great military events of British Indian history have been staged in the Peshawur Valley, that we are perhaps inclined to regard it as the whole of the great Frontier Province that fringes the Afghan marches. Since Pollock tried for many weary months to hearten his troops to face the Khyber, and avenge the Kabul disasters, and Avitabile kept the ring; or since Sidney Cotton and John Nicholson kept their own ring, blowing from the guns all who said them nay, while the border wondered; down to the days of the last Afghan War and Neville Chamberlain's mission, the '97 *débâcle* in the Kyber, or the prompt move against Zakkhas and Momands,—Peshawur has always been the focus of frontier view.

If we take a map, however, we shall see how small is the area of the Peshawur Valley, and the plain of the Sons of Joseph, compared with the rest of the Province and the long Trans-Indus strip that for over half a century was

the special charge of the old Frontier Force. And largest of all the districts included in the charge was that of the Derajat, the "Country of the people that live in tents." Fringed by the Waziri ranges of the Suleiman Mountains on the north, it runs, with the red line of peace and order always at the hill-foot, south past the raiding gorges at the base of the Takht-i-Suleiman, by broken gorge and raw red hill and robbers' nest, past Buddhist mounds and crumbling towers, till it joins the Sind border, some 300 miles south. And all the way live Afghan or Biloch tribes, to whom, from time immemorial, might has been right and will law, and he who had the better gun could hold the longer life. And over the alluvial horse-shoe plain of the upper portion of the Derajat towers the Takht itself, the Throne of Solomon, 11,000 feet in the sheer, where, as tradition has it, the great King and his three hundredth wife, returning home from the East astride a prayer-carpet, tarried a night as they skimmed the rugged crest,—tarried, at the bride's request, to take a farewell look at her native Hindostan. And where the pair tarried a shrine exists to this day, so that now and again, if the tribes be in the humour, it is given to the British officer to stand on the spot and look out as the royal pair looked,—north to the Himalayas,

and round west to that great wall of snow that separates the Indus valleys from Kabul. Or east to the great plains of the Five Rivers and the wide, wide streak of the mother Indus that flows to-day much as it flowed when Alexander came down from the Parapomisis and turned home down the Jhelum, or the Greek kings came out of Bactria a couple of centuries later, to flood the Panjab with their buildings and coins which still remain. And if you want evidence of this great inroad, why, look among the young tribesmen of the Marwat and Sherani and Wazir clans, and now and again you will see such a profile as shows to all time that the hand of the Greek soldiery fell heavy on the land of promise, after the manner of conquering soldiery.

From the top of the Throne of Solomon, if you use your glasses, you will see for a hundred miles and more the little square mud forts and towers that fringe the border, that still lies—as in the days when Greeks held sway, till the British succeeded the Sikhs—a mile or so away from the base of the hills. And if you ask why the border still lies at the foot of the hills, you will be told that it is ill taking the breeks from off a Highlander; but some folk will tell you that Governments are like bad contractors, who make the easy portion

of the road and shy at the rock-cutting; that the plains pay and are easy to control, and the hills the reverse, but that peace and ruth and civilisation should be spread as much in the mountains as in the rest of the world. All of which may be true, but tiresome and expensive.

In the square towers and forts along the border, the militia keep watch and ward, way-laying raiders and being waylaid in turn: an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, which is good border law. Here and there a larger post will show where a small force of regulars stiffens the militia and the levy, though in the early days of British rule, before we copied King George's Highland rule of a thief to catch a thief, all the border posts were held by regulars of the Frontier Force. The raid and counter-raid that have made the annals of that Force a romance on the frontier so long as its memory remains, took place for the most part on this same Derajat frontier.

When the British first tried to bolster up the Khalsa oligarchy, they sent their chosen to show the Sikhs that peace and order and the collection of revenue was a simple enough thing to secure and collect, if only you knew how to set about it. Over the Indus and into the Derajat came John Nicholson and Herbert

Edwardes, each in those pioneer days as much a law unto himself as the tribesman on the border, but to better purpose. With the help of the regular troops of the Khalsa Raj, clansmen who knew no law were hustled back over the border, and the Ghilzai nomad tribes who wished to remain camped there, as they had camped, winter in winter out, for the best part of a thousand years, learnt at the point of the sabre to mind their P's and Q's.

"The people who live in tents," and who have made the Derajat their own, come of three distinct peoples — Ghilzai, Pathan, and Biloch. Mingled with them on the Indus flats are Jats, that mysterious numerous people, from whom some say come the Gypsies, and about whom Sir Denzil Ibbetson may have left more lore. For the last thousand years and more the Afghan and Turki tribes of Central Asia have swept down to Delhi and the prize of soft Hindostan by way of the mountain-passes. Nine times out of ten the route has been by the two defiles that debouch on the Derajat, — the Gomal in the north and the Sangarh in the south. As Turks and Ghilzais and Slavekings and Tartars swept through the Derajat, they left a backlash, and some of the folk tarried, or were left of design to keep open the bolt-hole. Be that as it may, up against

every hill in the Derajat that can boast a spring or a sweet well strata is to be found some small Afghan or Ghilzai settlement, each of a separate tribe. Some are extended to principalities, and others are but remnants of broken tribes. All are at feud, as becomes men of highland breeding. Little they recked of authority, of kings and emperors of Delhi, or later of the Sikh governors, and every ruler assessed his revenues and his rents at the sabre's point, while every kinglet and masterless man raided his neighbour. Thus it was that none knew his own property or his last hour, and all men welcomed the iron hands and strong will of Nicholson and Edwardes, and tendered them that worship and allegiance that, all the world over, is the prerogative of personality. In two years the wills of these strong men had brought the plains that lie for three hundred miles between the Suleimans and the Indus to a fair imitation of peaceful Hindustan.

Besides the Afghan settlements in the Upper Derajat, for centuries an equally warlike folk, the Biloches, had been pressing up from the Persian Gulf and Mekran and the land of the Seistan swamps to find their own level with the Pathans in Suleiman Mountains. Pathan and Biloch had both fallen before the personality of Herbert Edwardes and the alluring

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prospect of peace and quiet which now and again appeals to the most lawless, especially when he has come to some estate. For when you come to think of it, good though it is to raid and to slaughter and to rape, and to carry off your neighbour's daughter screaming at your saddle-bow, still man is but human, and has his dark hours in which he reflects that having raided with success it would be as well if he could enjoy his plunder and his neighbour's daughter: when it is well to be free of the knowledge that he must watch for the avenger, and his hand keep his head till he die, lucky if it is late in life, to the enemy's knife or bullet.

Thus thought the Derajat, and thus think at all times the lawless; and thus, too, thinks Afghanistan, ever since the *Pax Britannica* reigned for two short years in Kabul, and only melted when the English forgot to be strong. All lawless lands yield readily to the strong ruler, with the proviso that strong he must remain.

And so it came about that when the Sikhs tried to shake off the British hand on the shoulder and murdered Vans Agnew and Anderson at Mooltan, the tribes of the Derajat flocked with offers of service to Edwardes, who then and there marched with several thousand Pathan and Dilloch horse

straight on Multan. Twice *en route*—at Kineri and Sadusam—he defeated the Sikhs sent against him, and joined the British besieging the guilty city. And because Mool Raj had risen at Multan, and with him the Sikh army, all the Panjab came under the British rule, and with it the border marches.

Out of the regular regiments of the Sikh Durbar were raised as corps of the Indian Army the Panjab Frontier Force—horse, foot, and artillery,—stationed, with a few exceptions, along the hills south from Peshawur to the Sind boundary. Five main cantonments were formed—Kohat, Bannu (or Edwardesabad), Dera Ismael Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan, and Asni,—of which the three last are in the Derajat. Out from the main cantonments were distributed those border posts to compete with the mountain raiders, which you look down on from the top of the Takht-i-Suleiman.

Asni, conceived in malaria and born in heat, was in a few years abandoned for the better-known Rajanpur. All over India you will find deserted cantonments—half the history of India in their graveyards or on the tablets in their deserted churches—that have been left high and dry as the red frontier line rolled ever north. Asni, a big cantonment, has now a few gatepillars and an officer's grave as its sole relic in a howling desert of camel-thorn. The onward

move that took the outer frontier to the Kojak left Rajanpur a derelict in the eighties, its cavalry lines and its bungalows crumbling to decay. Further changes have now removed all soldiery from Dera Ghazi Khan; and even the well-known border forts of Harrand and Mangrotah no longer have military garrisons. The frontier road that runs south from Dera Ghazi, and used to see the come and go of the Frontier Force officers, still remains, but the sahibs who use it are few. The travellers' registers in the old dak-bungalows are full of the names that you could conjure with on the frontier thirty years ago: Cavagnari and "Buster" Brown, Vousden and Keene and Brownlow—famous politicals, daring leaders of horse, their autograph testimony long surviving them to the effect that Khuda Baksh had given them a good breakfast, or that the crockery needed replacing.

From Rajanpur and Harrand and Mangrotah, in the twenty years that succeeded the coming of the British, daring counter-raid and sustained pursuit after the raiders from the hills fill the annals of the Frontier Force. Before and after the Mutiny, under Neville Chamberlain and Hedson and Kennedy, short sharp punitive expeditions had taken place against Sheranis, Bozdars, Maris, Mahsuds, and the like. Along this frontier and the neighbouring districts of

Bannu and Kohat the Frontier Force lived their old self-contained life apart from the rest of the Army, yet with an individual training and experience of rough-and-tumble soldiering and a regimental efficiency that has probably never been reached in its entirety by any other soldiers in the world, the Frontier Legion on the Great Wall in North Britain alone, perhaps, excepted. The change of times, the opening out of railways, the principles of army training, have all combined to alter the status of the frontier; and now the old Frontier Force is, for weal or for woe, merged in the cavalry and infantry of the line, and only takes the frontier stations in the process of roster. And as the Force has disposed of its old belongings, its club-houses, its messes, and its racquet-courts, the old romance of the frontier lies a-dying—dying slowly, for off the beaten tracks the old life clings so long as the ink in the travellers' registers can still be read, and old bound 'Blackwoods' and 'Frasers' from the old regimental libraries remain in the dak-bungalows to cheer the wayfarer's evening. It is good to read first-hand exactly what men thought of the Mutiny as it spluttered to a head, to see the old spirit of the Army when it is recorded in 'Maga' by an officer marching from Simla to Delhi: "At Kalka we found our adjutant waiting for us. He was actually reading a book on tactics. We wouldn't

have that sort of rot in the 1st, and we soon put a stop to it." They got into Delhi all the same.

If you travel north from the *daman* of the Derajat, through the Pass of Pezu, you will see perched on tumbled crags 4000 feet above you Sheikh-Budin, erstwhile the summer paradise of those marooned to the terrors of a Trans-Indus summer, now only the official residence of the local civil and military authorities. No longer the hub of "Piffer" summers, the band-stand decayed, the rink a mass of rubble, it stands almost a derelict, the once flourishing club perched on a treeless crag like a Thibetan jong. The newest books in what was once a library date from the Afghan War, and some bear the legend, "Presented by Major Cavagnari." A book lying in the verandah bears the inscription, "Book Club, 3rd Irregular Cavalry." Why, the 3rd Irregulars mutinied at Mianwali across the Indus, opposite by the Kurran confluence, half a century ago, when the old India died and the new India began. Fifty years is a short time anywhere outside British India; but here times change so fast, and men come and go so quickly, that it is but fitting that a book bearing the name of a dead and and gone light cavalry corps that dissipated in storm half a century ago should "strike old broken strings to melody."

If you wind up the bridle-path to the top of Sheikh-Budin you will look down on the Largi-Tilgi valley, where, miracle of miracles! you will see a silver river spring out of the abomination of desolation of those shattered strata and twisted shale. Four thousand feet below you it rises from the sand, to run a short mile and then be absorbed in irrigation for the adjacent fields. Some hidden bar of rock running across the valley brings the undersoil stream to the top, not only in one main spring but in twenty others, of which one is hot, to the glory of heaven and the wealth and prosperity of the village of Paniala. They will tell you that the village saint in the back ages blessed the hill and struck the rock, even as did Moses, till the streams gushed forth, and the village became blessed to the present day.

In the middle of the desert valley round this stream grow vast groves of date-palm, which men say sprang from the stones of the dried-date rations that a foraging or raiding party from Alexander's army left on their camping-ground. Talk of Alexander will account happily for any puzzling phenomena on the frontier.

Now let us turn from Alexander in the dim past, and the Frontier Force in the recent, and we shall strike in this strange district a new era and a new people. Parallel to the *Nilah Koh*, or

blue mountain, on which stands Sheikh-Budin, or the other or eastern side of Paniala and the Largi-Tilgi valley, runs the *Ruttah Koh*, or red mountain, touching for thirty miles or so the right bank of mother Indus. This range is mostly viewed from the Cis-Indus by the traveller on the Sind Sagar section of the North-Western Railway. If by chance you travel by this dust-swept line, you will discover what becomes of old railway-carriages, which are as rare as dead donkeys, except perhaps on a famous line in the south of Merry England. Here on the Sind Sagar they use them for first-class passengers, to the no small chagrin of the said passengers. This, however, is by the way a growl from the *Thall*—to use the local name for the karroo-like plateau that fringes the Cis-Indus. Looking from the Thall, across the *Sind*, as the arable land in the Indus bed is called, you will see the Ruttah Koh—looking red if the light is right, and running parallel to the railway-line, —a tumbled mass of rock and crag, till it breaks as it reaches the Kurram. Here the Nilah Koh beyond is pierced by the Tangdarra, a narrow pass through which every year or so the Sikhs would send unsatisfactory expeditions to exact revenue from the Pathans of Bannu, with ill-success till Nicholson and Edwardes showed them how. And it is probably on just this same

matter of revenue and cess that the rest of this story hangs.

Crossing back to the Derajat, and marching up to Paharpur, you will come to the southerly extremity of the Red Mountain, and you will find that the range of hills runs north in the arc of a bow, or the crescent of a moon, and that the tips of the crescent abut on the main channel of the Indus, or what was at one time the main channel. Now it should be apparent that if you own the crescent, if the arc is impassable save at one or two defensible points, a deep river forms the chord, and you hold the tips in strength, you have a very pretty strategic situation from which to live at your neighbour's expense. Further, if the land between the arc and the chord be fertile and tillable, you have a still better accession of strength, in a sanctuary where your own or subject people may lay by store for a rainy day. So, too, thought Rajah Bil and Rajah Til, the only names or tradition that remains among the ruins of the great fortified area between the Indus and the Ruttah Koh. Stay! There is one more breath of tradition remaining. That, as all the world over, is the story of the eternal feminine. At the tips of the crescent stand to this day two vast ruined fortresses of stone, black and dour and forgotten. They are known to the world as the Kafir

local shepherds climbs the crumbling bastions. The huge luggers of cedar wood, with their latteen-rigged sails, sail and pulley-haul up the Sind half a dozen miles from where the old channel lay, and only marsh and lesser streams skirt the old bank, left lonely to the wild-fowl.

Marching north out of the plain of the Derajat we come to the southern crescent and the fortress of Rajah—the tongue almost slips to Kaiser—Bil, built on rocky crags overhanging the river by little more than a hundred feet. The interior contains richly-carved temples and monkish cells, built of a stone extremely hard and porous, and full of fossil ferns and shells, that has certainly been brought many a hundred mile, and is quite different from the ordinary sandstone and limestone of the local hills. The Til Kafir Kot, thirty miles up stream, on the northern tip of the crescent, is situated 300 or 400 feet above the water, and also contains temples, but neither so large nor so ornamented as those in the smaller fort. The bastions and walls of this fort rise black and forbidding and indestructible, with great trimmed stones each half a ton weight. The temples themselves in both forts seem of the time and style of the temple of the Sun at Martand in Kashmir,—Hindu temples, that is to say, contemporary with the early Christian centuries. They all are ornamented

with rows of lozenges and diaper pattern that are strangely like the Tudor Rose and Portcullis. From the top of the big fort there are the remains of a covered way to what was evidently a landing-stage, and by that stage is the Kanjari Kothi, to outward appearance but a small shrine, but to all mankind in the neighbourhood the fatal house of the dancing-girl. All over Central Asia, up into Kashgar, down the course of the Helmund, up the road to Kabul, are ruins innumerable of Bactrian and Scythian kingdoms and of Hindu empires. Out of that great cauldron of the world's races came in modern times that new irruption of Timur the lame Tartar, of Genghiz Khan, and Mohammad of Ghorî, and Mahmood of Ghuzni. Moghul and Tartar and Turk and Afghan, and wherever they swept they left ruined towns and dead men and weeping women till all the immense civilisation between the Oxus and the Indus was turned to desolation. And in desolation it remains for the most part to this day, and desolate it will remain till some strong hand brings the peace and order which have been wanting these last thousand years. In the north the Russians are doing it, after their own fashion, which is not ours; in the south we are doing it, but in the great tract from Herat to Kandahar choked canals and ruined towns remain as they were

when Mahmood of Ghuzni destroyed them for mere lust of blood and tyranny.

Round the Ruttah Koh he who is interested in race evolution may see the Pathan changing from a mountaineering thief to a cultivator of the plains, altering his skin and his spots in the process. Here a man who can speak Pushtoo always uses Jatki (the language of the plain), and will tell you that though his father "wore the kilt," or rather the Afghan trousers, he has taken to the *chaddar* of the Panjabi, and his children will not know a word of the ancestral Pushtoo. It is the change from the hill to the plain that does it. The derelict of some Afghan invasion, the rich land of the Indus bed and the *Pax Britannica*, has taken little enough time to work the change. Fifty years hence the Afghan origin will be forgotten and the tribe admitted into the great family of Jats.

Of the tribes across the British border on the fringe of the Derajat, their ways and their customs and amenities, much might be written. But for the romance of the border it is enough to say that they are long-haired, fierce, and, where Afghan, implacable still, and where Biloch, have readily, with the good handling of the Sandeman methods, become good neighbours. The tribes in the south are Biloch, while those in the north are Sheranis and Waziris. While

we have made the whole of Baluchistan a province under a patriarchal administration, we have left the Waziri enclave to stew in its own juice, merely controlling the Gomal and Tochi caravan routes, that pass through their territory, by a line of militia-held posts. Of the Waziris, the Mahsuds are the implacables, and already in the fifty years of British connection have provoked many punitive expeditions. Pathans, of probably Rajput and not Afghan descent, they are hardy, active, cruel, relentless, and independent to a degree, each man for himself, and owning no tribal authority. It is not therefore possible to follow with success the Sandeman principle, that made a chief responsible for order and gave him the wherewithal, for the Mahsud will have none of such, and no chief could find a following to help to maintain rough order. They live in a fine upland country, and raid all and whom they may, and what to do with them—and they are a strong fighting clan—is one of the problems of the frontier. They are legally part of India, being within the Durand line, and it is only a policy of expediency that leaves them wolves' heads. Right and humanity demand that they be controlled. But it's ill taking hill-folks' land, and the cost needs counting.

Another interesting feature of the Derajat is the yearly exodus of the Ghilzai clans from

the snowy plateau about Ghuzni to the comparative warmth of the border. Every October down the Gomal and the Tochi stream thousands of Ghilzais armed to the teeth, with their camels and their wives and their children and their oxen and their asses and everything that is theirs. They hand over their arms at the British border-posts, and settle down to enjoy six months of secure nights, when the throat does not tickle to the thought of a hostile knife. The women and children and elders pitch their encampments in the Derajat, and the men disappear over the length and breadth of Hindustan to trade and to labour and to poach. To see a caravan come down the Gomal clan by clan and sept by sept, is to see the Scriptures before you and the exodus. Tall, bearded men with hooked noses and long, black locks, sword and buckler and hand-gun, stalk at the head of their camels. Atop the said camels are all the household gods, mingled with children and fowls and wee colts and Persian pussy cats. In lacquered *khajawahs*, or litters, ride the saucy prides of the harems, or chatter and loiter afoot boldly behind, with a wink at the passing sahib, which would earn the slipper or the back of the hair-brush if caught by the master in front. Behind drag the old ladies, forgotten and neglected, to be left on the nearest stone-heap if they

can tramp no more or if tiresomely garrulous. Theirs the lot to gather sticks and cow-dung for the fire, to catch the camel that has burst his moorings, and to bear all the thankless tasks of the camp. The girls in the *khajawahs* chatter and laugh and ogle, oblivious that beauty of Helen must pass, and that the lot of the toddling hag with the samovar is in due course to be theirs. *Et omnia vanitas!* If it's "Mary pity women!" in the West, it is so a thousandfold in the East.

As you drive down the frontier road in the winter, pass a Pawindah encampment, to use their local name, a score or more of picturesque children, in the happiness born of dirt, will rush after you shouting "*Paisa wachawa*," which, being interpreted, is "Throw us a copper, guv'nor," and will run half a mile in hopes of success. Pretty little imps they are, with fine regular features, and it is curious that though the men are Jewish of profile the children are Grecian. The Pawindahs or Ghilzais go far afield, and many have been in Australia, and the story of the camel-man who said "All right, boss," to the orders of a transport officer on a frontier campaign, is true and common enough. Sometimes men come back after eighteen years or so in Australia, speaking English fluently. Now and again an Australian lass comes too,

presumably of the class that in Africa would be termed *bijwoner*, and crosses the border to Ghuzni in some comfort and circumstance, after being duly confronted with a magistrate, to see that she goes of her own will. One is given to wonder if she in due course will share the lot of Biddy with the samovar, or if the white blood and spirit will gain ascendancy and rule the Ghilzai roost.

In April the clans gather for the return, re-draw their arms for the return journey through the no-man's land of the Waziris, through which each convoy must fight its way, though of late years the British control of the Gomal has helped for the first fifty miles. Among the merchandise that loads the shaggy camels are bale on bale of ready-made frock-coats of black angola, that are the vogue in Afghanistan and Central Asia for all gentlemen of fashion, and the observant say that they find it easier and less costly to bring those same frock-coats through the thousand miles of British India than the hundred miles of Afghan Alsatia.

So the border runs, and perhaps, though Bil and Til are but names, and the Frontier Force has gone, and Brown and MacAulay and Cavagnari are dead, the romance of snowy peaks and shaggy camels and nomad races and lawless items will still keep the border the border for

many a year to come. Be it remembered, however, that all this only applies to the bitter winter and its spring and autumn. When it comes to the summer, then *Tobah! Allemachtig!* the blue hills die out in haze, and the red sirocco blows, and the roads are buried in sand, and the whole foot-hills are a fiery furnace, in which only the hardest may walk unsinged. But come summer come winter there is a fascination about rock and sand and scrub and camel thorn and hairy men that clings to the frontier as it clings to the veldt and the Soudan, and never quite goes out of a man's bones. Till the lion lies down with the lamb, the border will produce fierce men on one side, and good soldiers on the other, to handle them, even though the glory of the Frontier Force as such has departed and the Line holds the frontier by roster. The fining-pot for silver and the furnace for gold, and the frontier hills for handy soldiers.

A LIGHT SIDE OF MARTIAL LAW.

IN the early days of the Boer War, before refugee camps were thought of, or martial law was codified, it became necessary for the military authorities to administer the frontier districts of Cape Colony and Natal, threatened or recently evacuated by the enemy, from the Blood River round to Mafeking, each according to the lights of the officer commanding there. No handbooks, instructions, or previous experience threw light upon the subject, and the only clear maxim that stood out regarding martial law was that "might was right"; the only qualifying conditions were common-sense and expediency.

When, therefore, officers, in addition to their military cares and responsibilities, had to carry on a substitute for the civil government temporarily abolished, great scope existed for the display of their capacities, and the difficulties and anomalies experienced were considerable. The only provision that military tradition made for dealing with civilians was through the office of

Provost-Marshal, an official who was responsible for the sanitation and good order of military encampments, and who generally controlled ~~any~~ transactions with the civil inhabitants.

In South Africa, the administration of districts under martial law was usually carried out by this officer under the orders of local commandants. It should be remembered that many of the provinces occupied by the Boer invaders were annexed by proclamations, and republican *landdrosts* and *vrede-rechters* (J.P.'s) were appointed, the British officials having been deported or withdrawn. The re-establishment of every sort of administration fell to the hands of the military after the reoccupation of the districts. It is proposed to outline a Provost-Marshal's day's work amidst a bewildered population, in a district in which all civil machinery had ceased for the nonce to work, which was just reoccupied by the Imperial forces, and which, bordering on the two Republics, was always liable to visits from their guerilla troops.

Imagine the British camp, on high veldt overhanging the Vaal, guarding the temporary railway bridge, built beside the ruined girders and piers of the original viaduct, destroyed by the Boers in their hurried flight from Kimberley to the north bank of the Vaal. A smaller encampment guards the bridge-head on the northern

bank, aided by two light field-guns mounted in a redoubt. To the east the country rolls away in scrub-clad folds of deepest blue to the bush veldt of the south-western Transvaal; westward, stretches more scrub and plain, even bluer, down to the dry Hartz and the great desert.

A mile and a half from the bridge-head is a large village full of Dutch market-gardeners, and a few diggers, who wash for diamonds in the riverine deposits on either bank of the Vaal. Between the camp and the village are acres of old diamond washings, where the Kaffir still hunts for stones that may have been overlooked. For miles round lie scattered farms, almost all owned by Dutchmen; there is hardly a family which has not sent one member to join the enemy, while in many cases every male joined the Transvaaler invaders, in their haste to the hoped-for sack of Kimberley. Every farmer in the district expected to have a Kimberley carriage-horse, every mountainous *vrouw* a silken dress and diamond necklet.

When the tide of war rolled back, half these rebels returned to their farms and buried their rifles, in the hope that they might escape notice, while many of the bolder rogues followed the fortunes of the invaders.

To the administration of the district, the commandant was called on to add the functions of

a judge and apprehend all rebels. As a basis for a code, the commandant issued a proclamation regulating the conduct of the inhabitants as broadly as possible, and appointing a military commission of two officers, one his Provost-Marshal, and the civil magistrate, or Justice of the Peace, to try all offences against martial law. The carrying out of the provisions of the proclamation and all dealings with the civil inhabitants were left to the Provost-Marshal, with the injunction to remember that martial law was only to interfere with the convenience of the inhabitants so far as was necessary for the advancement of military matters, for the suppression of information and supplies intended for the enemy, and for the discipline and sanitation of the military encampments.

At 8 A.M. daily the Provost-Marshal begins work in a tent on the outskirts of the camp; already a dozen folk are waiting, and the sergeant of the civil mounted police is in attendance.

The first to be interviewed is a Dutch lady of enormous proportions, who has not alighted from her Cape cart. Her Hottentot boy approaches, and says "Ode missis" wants to see me, shall she get down? By no means, lest we have to put her up again; so we walk over to "ode missis," who is looking most frigid. A cheery salutation from the Provost-Marshal does not

seem to mend matters. What can we do for her? Yesterday the military drove off two hundred sheep from her farm, leaving her a receipt; was I aware of that? Would I look at the receipt? I was aware of it; the signature was my own. The irate lady must be tackled, and experience suggests a leading question.

"Where is your 'man'?" Silence. "Where is your man?"

At last comes the reluctant answer, "My man is not at home." The police-sergeant here explains that her husband joined Cronje's commando in November, and has not been heard of since.

Very well; we inform the lady that the military must be fed, that her husband if not a rebel will be paid in due course, and that she must keep the receipt. The scowling victim, who very clearly understands the situation, drives off. There are one thousand sheep on her farm, so starvation is not within sight.

The next on the list is Mrs Japee Malan, so called from her husband's initials, J. P. She also is an eighteen-stone weight, but more comely; smartly dressed withal, and her face is wreathed in smiles. What can I do for her?

"Oh, a great deal, captain; they've arrested Japee for a rebel, and sent him away. Japee's not a rebel, he hasn't got it in him. I'm the rebel, captain; you ought to arrest me" (this is

perfectly true, but the traditions of the nineteenth century forbid it), "and now I'm all alone, captain, and the winter is coming on."

We pacify Mrs Japee by promising to recommend her husband, well known as a harmless creature, to be released on bail, if the evidence against him is slight; and, with a compliment to the lady's hat, she is induced to climb into her cart and drive off.

The next applicant is Swart, a pleasant old greybeard, who, like many another crafty sinner on the fence, thinks he has squared the circle by sending one son to the Boers and one to the Imperial Forces. He is now playing the latter card for all he is worth, and bears a note from the magistrate recommending that he be allowed a pass to drive to a neighbouring village. This is easily granted, and we turn our attention to the local storekeeper, a Peruvian Jew, who wants to run two waggons of tinned provisions across the Free State frontier where he has a branch store. As this is tantamount to feeding the enemy, this request is refused, despite his hint that he can let our mess have a couple of turkeys!

Now comes a quaint little olive-complexioned lady, wearing a white kappie on her head. Her husband, a respectable young Dutchman, against whom we have nothing, is ill in his farm a few miles across the water; last night some Kaffirs

from the Barralong location visited the farm, stole their fowls and mealies, and threatened to shoot all the Dutch in the country.

"Oh my, we were afraid!" said the little lady, with an accent that might have been acquired at Munsoorie Pahar. We order the police-sergeant to send four mounted constables to fetch the head man of the location at once. Whatever justification the Kaffirs have, the line between black and white in South Africa must be clearly defined. Johanna is reassured, and promised that the doctor shall ride out and see her husband to-morrow.

Then come two English diggers, one who wants to dig in claims to which he has no right, and him we refer to the magistrate; the other pleads that he can get no natives to dig, and can make no money, can I assist him to earn a living? I can offer him employment as a special armed policeman, provided I have a good report of him from the J.P.; or can send him away for employment as a conductor in the transport department; ten shillings a day in either case.

Next arrives a constable from patrol, to say that one Dankie (Daniel) Van Reenen of Slip Klip Oost has returned to his farm, but lives in the bush by day.

I make out an order for his arrest, and order his farm to be visited at night, in the hope of securing him; he is wanted for treason and

murder. At the same moment comes a telegram from the Crown Prosecutor to know if I have any affidavits against the local predicant (Dutch minister), to which I am regretfully obliged to reply "Not yet." A pestilent fellow this predicant, with a snuffle and an irritating choker, who could have kept all his flock loyal and saved them many a bitter pill had he had the pluck to do so, or even the skill to sit on the fence. His wife stole the magistrate's rose-trees the day he withdrew from his house. And now she's hurt that the magistrate's wife won't visit her.

Outside, with some commotion and a hearty chuckle, Andries Malan of Riversdal bustles out of his cart. A wealthy jovial farmer this, and a *bai slim karl*, whose plucky English wife has kept him on the right side of the fence through six trying months. "I am for the flag, I am!" roars Andres, as he grasps one's hand; he just looked in to see the captain, and to pass the time of day, also to mention that he would like to make an offer for Dirk Vanderboom's stock, which he understands the military have confiscated. He would gladly give five shillings a head for the sheep (I should think he would) and save the military the trouble of looking after them. "Stupid fellow, Dirk, eh! I always used to say to him, 'You were born under the flag, and you must remain under the flag.'"

Here Dirk Vanderboom's wife happens to drive up, so our friend says he'll call again: "So long, captain, hope you will come out to my place." As Mrs Dirk has arrived opportunely we interview her at once. She is evidently much upset. Such injustice, the *mooie captain* (handsome captain) will surely see her righted. Her dear little *kindje* can't walk through the village without the English calling out "little rebels" after them. This is very serious.

"But, my dear madam," say I, "your husband is now in jail awaiting trial, and he was captured in arms; I don't see what else people could call your children?" "Oh, captain!" sobs the lady, and has to be led away by the police-sergeant, who understands good-looking vrows.

Hardly had she driven off when the local scab inspector drives up, with a report that scab has broken out among the sheep on the farm next his,—what is he to do? This is rather absurd, and shows how quickly Government machinery can fall into disuse. I write him an order: "The commandant warns you that you are responsible that scab is dealt with during martial law exactly as in ordinary times," and send a copy to the nearest administrator. The inspector brightens up, and assures me that he can now proceed.

The next arrival betokens a short respite, and

is none other than the field-cornet of the district, a Scotchman, endued with more than the ordinary share of the kindliness, probity, and dry humour of his race. He has been the trusted friend and adviser of the military authorities, and now has come up to invite us to a cheery partridge poach on a farm on the Free State border. Business permitting, we promise to go, and then request information on various local matters. As the field-cornet drives off, another trusty friend appears, in the leading English resident, sometime digger, hunter, and prospector, now market-gardener and general business agent, and also special justice for the district, who has lately commanded a troop of irregulars in the defence of Kimberley. As in these troublous districts half the English loyalists will denounce the other half as befriending the rebels, many a report is busy with the names of these two gentlemen, but such reports are received for what they are worth; and they are often mingled with information of real value, so are loyalty and lip-service, spite and self-seeking mingled, and one begins to realise what must have been the state of affairs in America during the War of Independence.

Our J.P. brings an invitation to supper with his cheery wife and jolly children, and then turns to business. First, he is on the village

management board, and as most of the other members are "in trunk" as rebels, he has no machinery to carry on ordinary sanitary measures. So I say that the commandant will authorise him to act provisionally with full authority for the village board; will this do? It will.

Next, the jailer in the civil jail has been hopelessly drunk for three days; he has suspended him, but has no further authority, and can get no answer to telegrams to the civil authority in the colony. As there are several rebels in jail, what do I suggest? I can either appoint a provost sergeant as temporary jailer, or I can place a constable in that position; we decide on the latter, and agree to deport the jailer. Next there are two offences against martial law, one against a liquor bar-keeper for supplying soldiers with drink, another against a Dutchman near the bridge for keeping lights after 10 P.M. When will I come and form a quorum of the Martial Law Commission with him to hear the cases? We arrange 3 P.M. He wants nothing more in the way of business, but as several more women are waiting, will he support me while I interview them?

The first is Mrs Pete Joubert, a smartly dressed, sallow, thin Dutch woman of some education. Her husband, a wealthy farmer, and also a justice of the peace, has been arrested, and

sent away charged with heading the local disaffection. Madame urges that he suffers from asthma, and that he cannot live away from home, that he has never borne arms, and that she hates the English, also that the farm is going to pieces without him. The only reply to this is that her husband is properly cared for, and must stay in jail till his trial is over, that war is sad, that she has to thank Paul Kruger for her trouble, and that had her husband done his duty to the Government of which he was a J.P., she and many other women would be happier now. Ah, yes, she admits that, but naively adds, "We thought we should win; and" (fiercely) "we *shall*, too!" She was born a Free Stater.

"Do you know, captain, why there is this war? It is because the English always think themselves a little better than the Dutch, and the English women think themselves better than the Dutch women."

Here is a fresh point of view, and one which a sneaking feeling whispers is not altogether false; we seem to have heard a similar complaint against the English on the Continent.

However, Mrs Joubert, whose graceful gestures betray her French descent, has now had her say, and is fairly satisfied by a promise on my part to see that any warm clothes, comforts, and

letters she sends shall reach her husband, that she shall be informed if he is ill, and also that she can be given a pass to travel by rail to visit him. Two more ladies in *kapjies* are waiting, artfully asking for the *mooie captaan*. One explains that her husband joined Cronje's force six months ago, and she does not know if he is alive or dead; that the Kaffirs have stolen her sheep and goats; and that she and her three children are starving.

I arrange with the J.P. to accommodate them in the school, and issue rations to them, if the commandant approves, and refer to headquarters for further instructions. This is the forerunner of the vast refugee camps. The other damsel in a sun-bonnet wishes to be allowed to open a coffee-booth in camp, and live there in her waggon with her mother.

"Nickie," asks my friend the J.P., "var is par?"

"My par is dood op Mud Rivier."

Her father apparently has been killed at Modder River—the wages of rebellion paid in full. We cannot permit a booth in camp, but will give her leave to drive up every day and sell vegetables and cakes from 9 to 5. "Nickie" (niece, a friendly mode of address) is quite satisfied, and trudges off.

The sight of a black coat and tall hat driving up in a Cape cart frightens away the J.P. "It's

that beast of a parson. I'm off, so long, captain." The unctuous predicant and his pert little *wrouw* next arrive, and we shout for chairs; the cloth, even when disloyal, must be treated with courtesy.

"Good morning, Mr Platrand, good morning, Mrs Platrand, won't you sit down? What can I do for you?"

"I want a pass to Cape Town, captain, or rather, to the Paarl."

"Very sorry, *mynheer*, but my orders are not to let you leave the district till you have explained your frequent visits to Cronje's *laager*, and your sermons to your people here, and your public prayers for the welfare of the Boers."

"Oh, captain, I was compelled to go, or the Boers would have been angry and my people displeased with me; it is true I prayed for the Boers, but the Bible, captain, tells us we should pray for our enemies."

Truly a casuist this. Madame now joins in. "Mr Platrand always gets asthma in the winter, and he must go to Paarl, and he never drove to Cronje's *laager*, or prayed for the Boers; the *landdrost* threatened to fine him. Oh my, he *was* afraid!" The only thing I can do for them, however, is to promise to ask the commandant to forward an application to leave the district to the headquarters of the command, but I can hold out ~~no~~ hope of its being granted. Mr Plat-

rand's chickens are coming home to roost, and the treason court looms before him.

Here the J.P. drives up with an Englishman in his trap, and a note from the railway staff officer to say that Mr Macpherson and two companions have been found in the train going north without passes; as the J.P. is acquainted with them he has detained two and sent one to see me. Mr Macpherson explains that he has property and stock up near Mafeking and he must go and look after it, his companions are his two agents. They were put over the line when the Transvaalers occupied Bechuanaland, and proclaimed its annexation. The J.P. corroborates this statement, and adds that he has known Mr Macpherson, who was born in the United Kingdom, for years.

"Well, gentlemen, the Commander-in-Chief's orders are strict that no civilians travel north, and no civilians are allowed by train, unless possessed of a special pass. You should have got this at Kimberley, and you have apparently evaded the station authorities there. As the J.P. can vouch for you, you and your companions may go where you like in the village to-day, and will report yourselves at 7.45 P.M. to the railway staff officer to return south by the 8 P.M. train. Should you fail to be there it will be my duty to send you back under arrest; as

it is, you are liable to a fine for travelling without a pass." This is a hard case in a way, for the man had important interests up north; but so have hundreds of others, and food-stuffs up the line are scarce, while he has undoubtedly been trying to steal a march on the military. At any rate, the Chief's orders are rigid, and as no one knows yet how affairs will turn in the north, the fewer non-combatants about the better.

The next arrival is a mounted constable to report that the dead body of a farmer has been found on the road ten miles away, and has been carried to the nearest farm. This is in the police-sergeant's jurisdiction, he must arrange with the field-cornet, who is coroner, to view the body, and I will send the military surgeon also; the police must make all inquiries.

Three quaint-looking Kaffirs now ride up on tattered ponies, two men from one of the piquets with them. They are in great trouble, and inhabit a location just within the Transvaal border; last night twenty armed Boers visited their location, seized one of their number, shot him dead, and zjambokked three other men and one woman; the woman having died since, will the Lord send his *impi* and avenge them, or will he give them rifles.

No, the Lord can't do that just at present, it is only one of these cruel reprisals which the

Boers, especially the Western Transvaalers, who are themselves touched with the brush, and consequently deeply anti-Kaffir, take only too frequently.

The Boers cruelly massacred many of these Barralongs a generation ago, and have ill-treated and looted their cattle since the commencement of the war, and now that the tide of victory is setting northwards, the Kaffirs are raiding their own stock back again, with a little interest added, and probably intimidating and insulting the Boer women in isolated farms. The Boer resorts to cruel and unmentionable atrocities in the hope of cowing them. It is a sad state of things. In Africa, there is only one real race question, black and white, not Dutch and British. The Boer does not discriminate in his reprisals, and is cruel to a degree past belief where an offending "nigger" is concerned.

The only temporary expedient is to tell the Kaffir chieftlet that he may bring all his location in to squat in the scrub on the opposite bank; and that, in return, he must let me have all the native labour I want.

Next to arrive is a giant farmer bent with age, one Stoffel Schmit of Uitkyk, whose business is chiefly to air his grievances, and discuss the prospect of compensation. His case is a sad one, and only too typical of many in the land.

Refusing to side with the Burghers in the '81 war, he trekked from the Transvaal to the British territory of Griqualand West, and there purchased a farm, on which he settled. In 1899 he kept aloof from the seething rebellion around him, and being eyed askance by the Boer party, had his stock and horses carried off by the invaders.

But his troubles do not end here, for two months ago some irregulars, with the force advancing north in pursuit of the Boers from Kimberley, spend the night at his farm, pull down his outhouses for firewood, kill all his chickens, eat up all his forage, and finally carry off his waggon and ox team, without as much as leaving even a receipt. What does the *captaan* recommend him to do, and what has he profited by loyalty? There is little enough we can say to him, save to assure him, in the words of the wise old President, "oud Brand," that *alles sal recht kom*; and that I will represent his case at once; and to remind him of one Job, and that "those the Lord loveth, He chasteneth."

Stoffel is succeeded by a very different class of Dutchman, one Jan Oberhalzer, a dour silent customer, who complains that the troops are making a fort in his garden near the pont on the Vaal. Now, Master Jan—"Oom Jan" the neighbours call him—has four strapping sons on

commando, and though too old to fight himself, was prominent in advocating the ill-treatment of the English inhabitants during the occupation by the Republicans.

The old man asks why the fort is built in his garden, and by what right; and as a few home truths seem wisest, we say: "The fort is built in your garden because the commandant thinks it the best spot, and he would rather inconvenience a disloyal man than one of your loyal neighbours. It may quite possibly be necessary to knock loopholes in your sitting-room wall also."

"*Allemachtig!*" is all that Oom Jan can find to reply to such a speech from a *Rooinek*.

One more visit is worth chronicling to complete these illustrations of the trivial side of a Provost-Marshall's work. Enter the widow De Beer, first to introduce a son, who has been riding transport for the British, and whose brother is out with the Boers. She is a tall, raw-boned, elderly person of unprepossessing appearance, more like a Scotch Grenadier than the usual comfortable *wrow*. Her complaint is a serious one, and not unknown in Merry England. A sergeant of the Militia battalion that has just left had promised to marry her, and make a lady of her in Scotland, on the strength of which she had lent him two pounds. Did the *captain* think the man would

keep his word? He had told her she was very comely, and she had believed him. I could only reply with a few commonplaces, but said that he seemed to be a truthful man, which put my visitor in a good humour, and she was induced to go.

Morning after morning, in addition to more serious work, a similar levée would be held, resulting in some superficial insight into the character of an inscrutable people.

The Dutch mind is as great a riddle to an Englishman as the Asiatic. It seems impossible to discover the mainspring of their actions; but mingled with all the deceit and "three-corneredness" so apparent in many of them, one finds much to admire in those who are in many ways, despite their detractors, simple pastoral people. Notwithstanding their own "slimness" the Dutch appreciate straight dealing more than anything else, and they fully realise that they get it from British officers, even where wise and sympathetic control is absent: and where firm rule is combined with consideration and sympathy the Boers become much attached to the military administration, and some of our officers acquire great influence over them.

THE MASTER-GUNNER.

It is fifty-four years, this year, since the great Sepoy Mutiny came to a close, and since the English had to fight for their own against the highly trained Army of their own creating. With the suppression of that Mutiny, and of the rising of the people that accompanied it, the India of Clive and Warren Hastings, of Dupleix and Deboigne and the Marquis Wellesley, passed away. In its place came Imperial Government, a large British Army of occupation, a vast railway system, and a steady introduction, for weal or for woe, of European system. Immense public works, far-reaching benevolent institutions, an educational programme to which no end can be seen, followed on the new *régime*. Most of our works have been misunderstood of the people, and now we are in the midst of an India that may give us infinite trouble in days to come. That, however, is to produce stories yet to be told.

This is a story of that Mutiny, the "Great

Fear," when a pampered army mutinied for no reason in the world, mutinied in the mass without knowing why or wherefore, and often without intending to do so, and having mutinied, surpassed the French revolutionaries in barbarous ruthlessness.

In the pitiless heat of the June following the month in which the storm had burst on the unsuspecting English, a small British garrison was defending a huge rambling fort, that contained half the equipments of an army, and kept open the communications by the Ganges, with Calcutta and the provinces of the North. On its successful defence hung the fate of a dozen and more similarly defended spots up country. The garrison consisted of a weak company of one of the European regiments of the Honourable East India Company, of fifty men of a Sikh Irregular Corps yet loyal to their recent conquerors, a dozen invalid artillerymen of a veteran battalion, and a few local officials, European and Eurasian. Added to these were the surviving English officers from a brigade that had mutinied in the adjacent cantonment. Perhaps a hundred and fifty women and children completed the anxieties of the aged brigadier, who had assumed command instead of having been in the enjoyment of his pension for ten years past. In John

Company's days you kept in harness till you died, and the oldest private became the youngest corporal, and so on up the hierarchy, till a general of division would number eighty summers. So it was no small wonder that the military card-house, that had succeeded the fighting armies of Lake and Wellesley and Monro, should topple when the wind rose, and had been the laughing-stock of good soldiers for twenty years before the mutiny.

Thus if the old Brigadier had been unequal to the situation it was small blame to him, who had spent all his life in the service of our grim stepmother,—more of his life than she or any other employer had right to. Fortunately there were ready and loyal hands and heads to help him through, in the share of an officer of artillery in charge of the fort, and a captain of irregular cavalry, so that the defence was well organised, and the non-combatants and refugees suitably housed and controlled.

Outside, three battalions of mutinous infantry, some cavalry, and all the scum of the countryside, after pillaging the cantonment and civil station, and burning all Government buildings, had sat down to besiege the place of refuge. And all the while the column of mercury in the magazine verandah crept up and up, till

the thermometer stood at one hundred and ten degrees, and the Europeans on the wall peered out through their sun-scorched eyes, and the women gasped in the casemates below the bastions, and both thanked Heaven that all the guns had been within the fort, and that there had been no artillery to mutiny with the rest of the brigade.

On the fifth morning after the mutiny, as the Brigadier and his artillery officer had staggered round the fort, revived by the slight drop in temperature that must come after even the hottest night, they saw a puff of smoke spray out from the tank by the native infantry quarter guard, followed by the unmistakable hum of a round-shot, which struck the parapet near by the main entrance. A few minutes later, a second crashed through the upper portion of the iron-bound door of the main gateway, to be followed by the whistling of a shell from a nine-inch mortar, which landed fairly in the centre yard.

The gunner looked at the Brigadier, and the Brigadier swore aloud. Despite his seventy years and growing infirmities, the brave old man had succeeded in pulling himself together, and was now as determined as a man in his prime, as became an officer who had been through the Sikh and Afghan wars and had been one of

the "Illustrious Garrison,"¹ who had, moreover, carried a pair of colours at the capture of Bhurtpur. But the walls of the old fort sadly needed repair, and while broken bottles kept thieves from the magazine, a very few days' pounding would bring them down like paper. However, it was a case for "dogged does it," and all the troops not on guard and all the followers and refugees were put to make sacks and fill them with earth, till sandbags were piled high against the gates, and spare heaps were collected at intervals.

Where the guns had come from was a puzzle, and still more so whence had come the skilled gunner who was pointing them so accurately. Twice had the flagstaff been shot down from atop the main guard, and four times running had the main gate itself been struck. Twice also had shell dropped on to the magazine roof, only to be rolled off by a faithful Lascar. Presently news had filtered in that the guns had been sent down the Jumna (by boat) by Rajah Kunwar Singh, who had joined the mutineers and declared for the Moghul puppet at Delhi. Two good twelves had he sent, a nine-inch mortar, and four three-pounders, but as he had no artillerymen, that did not account for the good shooting. Fortunately, though the

¹ *I.e.*, of Jellalabad.

besiegers surrounded the fort and kept up a musketry fire, they had no stomach for a direct assault, content to receive every rush of rumbling masonry that followed a successful shot with loud cheers. And all the while the invalid artillerymen, assisted by the Sikhs, plied the fort six-pounders, and men dropped senseless in the morning sun, and women and children died in the casemates, and all looked wearily for help from below. In the garrison a wild tale had gone about that there were renegade white gunners helping the enemy, and presently a native came in to say that Pat Delahaney himself was working the rebel gun. Now Pat Delahaney was an ex-sergeant of Bengal Horse Artillery, a member of the Invalid Battalion, of which a detachment was stationed at the fort, representing the settlement of old military pensioners, who had elected to remain in India on the veteran establishment. Of the dozen old artillerymen, all were within the fort except Delahaney, who had been away in the district visiting a married daughter at the time of the rising. He had been the best known shot with a six-pounder in all the horse artillery for the last twenty years, and when it was reported that he had turned renegade, the success of the rebel guns was explained.

Furious was the little garrison inside at the

idea of his treachery, loud were the threats of vengeance, and accurately laid were the fort guns that replied to the fire from the tank.

Sergeant James M'Gillivray, however, who commanded the detachment of invalid gunners, would have none of it, for Delahaney was his bosom friend. "A divil of an O'Brien bhoy he is, sorr, thrue for you; and why wouldn't he be, for his father was hung on College Green," cried he to the Brigadier; "but divil a rebel would he be, sorr, and join thim black blagyards, glory be to God, sorr."

But for all that M'Gillivray could say the story was believed, and when that afternoon six shots running struck the gateway, and the whole arch fell down, even that staunch champion was staggered.

"'Tis moighty foine shooting. Oi've known Delahaney stroike the bull eight toimes out of noine at a thousand yards. Mother av God, fwhat will oi du if me old chum's there?"

But Delahaney or nigger, the fact remained, and all the garrison could do was to see their refuge battered about their ears, and reply as best they could, repairing their damage night by night, and burying their dead, while the dust whirled and eddied in the corners by the bastions and the white wheel guide-posts, and the pale children despite the heat played on the chains

under the *siris* trees, and dodged Mr Delahaney's round-shot, as now all openly called them.

It was on the morning of the ninth day, after a night more fiercely oppressive than its fore-runners, when a shell had come into a casemate and killed a woman and two children, and the garrison was done to a turn, that a flourish of bugles was heard in the trees south of the fort, followed by the roar of cannon and rattle of musketry. The garrison hurried to the ramparts in time to see the red coatees and white cross-belts of the mutineers scuttling about in the jungle near, and doubling away across the maidan, then to break and return pursued—yes, actually pursued—by European cavalry, closely followed by European infantry, who fired as they ran, to the music of quavering cheers from the old fort walls. It was a poor stand for three of the best battalions of the Bengal line to make against a third of their number, but a guilty conscience is a poor ally, and the English were more than angry. They are usually so steady and sleepy that folk had forgotten then, as they sometimes forget now, how very angry the English can get, if it really is worth while being so.

In half an hour's time the red coatees and white cross-belts had all disappeared, except for a couple of hundred or so who had the mis-

fortune to be taken prisoners, and General Neil himself and his bluecap Lambs were forming up half mad with thirst at the battered main gate, which eager hands were busy clearing. The first man of action had arisen, and already light was beginning to show through the clouds to all India, while those in the fort had almost forgotten there was an outer world.

As Neil and the Brigadier shook hands, amid the cheers of the defenders and the relievers, a sergeant hurried up to the General. "Beg pardon, sir, we've caught a European a-working the niggers' guns, sir."

"Did you kill him?" asked the General, laconically.

"No, sir," said the sergeant. "The lootenant said we was to keep him."

"Damn the lieutenant," was all the General said, for his mind was full of other matters. "Put him in the fort guard."

And so Patrick Delahaney, half dazed with sun and drink, was shoved into the fort guard amid the execrations of the defenders. He had worked the two rebel twelves for four days, and Sergeant James M'Gillivray was allowed to go and see him. The story of shame he heard was this, and it was fully expanded by a half-caste medical subordinate whom the rebels had spared and forced to serve them.

Delahaney, driving back in a buggy from visiting his daughter, had been seized by the mutineers and dragged before Ressaldar Major Ramzan Khan of the Irregular Horse, who by virtue of seniority after the order of the Company, as well as his fanatical partisanship for the new rule, commanded the rebel brigade. That very day had Kunwar Singh's guns arrived by boat, and Delahaney's fame as a gunner was well known. It was therefore proposed to him that he, for untold gold, should join the rebels and train their gunners under commission from the Padishah at Delhi. Delahaney's refusal had been direct, and highly coloured with picturesque Hibernian blasphemy, daring them to kill him if they wished, and be d——d to them.

But, willy-nilly, Delahaney's services the mutineers were determined to have, so he was then and there tied up to the wheel of one of Kunwar Singh's long twelves, and flogged by the drummers of the grenadier company till even his spirit gave way and he became insensible. The next morning he was given food and a large tot of rum, and again tied up to the gun wheel. "Will you now fire the guns?" he was asked, and on refusing the flogging recommenced. The heart of the man was broken, though he had often enough taken a flogging in his youth like any decent Irish soldier . . . but in his old age

and from mutineers! . . . and the old soldier wept in his agony, as the old brigadier had nearly wept at his time of trial. "Take me down," he had cried, "and I'll fire your blasted guns!" So he was untied from the improvised triangles and given more stimulant and led to the tank where two twelve-pounder guns had been got into position. Staggering to the limber, he got out a round and cartridge and arranged the friction-tube and lanyard. The gun loaded and laid, the first round fired at his friends by first-class gunner Sergeant Patrick Delahaney sped on its way against his countrymen, and the layer groaned aloud. But he had laid the round well off the gate, and the first shot took no effect. Ranzan Khan, the rebel leader, standing near to watch the effect of his new master-gunner, fiercely ordered the sergeant to be tied up to the gun wheel again without a word of explanation. "Flog him another fifty, till he can remember to shoot straight, but see that you do not kill him!" and then and there on his mangled back fifty more lashes were laid on. "Now take him back to the battery; and just you remember, Master *Feringhee*, that every bad shot you make will mean fifty more, and I shall take good care not to kill you."

And so it had come about that Delahaney had shot straight and true, not for his life, for which

he cared little, but to save his mangled back from more lashes and from salt and spirit and chillies, and every agony that the tender ruth of the mutineer could devise to break a strong man's heart without killing him.

Once he had given up the struggle he had worked his guns steadily and accurately as one in a dream, and had been freely plied with stimulants. On the memorable morning that Neil's relieving column had fallen on the besiegers, Delahaney, dazed and half drunk, had fallen down by one of the guns after the native gunners had fled only to fall to the bayonet, and in this state had been found by a party of Neil's Lambs and had been dragged and cuffed into the presence of the General, and thence to the fort main guard.

All that afternoon summary courts were doing justice on the captured mutineers, such justice as only a really angry people can carry out on those who have hopelessly abused the trust put in them. Seven guns drawn up on the parade-ground outside the fort served as the anteroom to the courts of justice held in the shade of the ruined main gate. By batches at the cannon's mouth the mutineers, after the customary law of the East, expiated their offence, in silence and in resignation. The next day a general court-martial would try renegade and ex-

Sergeant Patrick Delahaney for desertion to the enemy.

But in the meantime M'Gillivray had spread the story of the rebel master-gunner far and wide, and the tide of fury and indignation that had set so strong against him had now turned to sorrow and deep perplexity. The officers ordered to try him were in sore doubt. The times were stirring, and death roamed the land unmolested, so that men's hearts did not stick at trifles. In this merciless mutiny there was no room for renegades, and besides, there was a terrible story from the north, none the better for having grown in every station and every canteen through which it had filtered. General Neil was a hard, strong man, furious at the supineness and incompetence he had met with in his avenging march, implacable against the men who had added merciless massacre to military mutiny, and little like to allow extenuating circumstances to affect his treatment of the guilty. And there seemed little doubt but that Delahaney had openly and effectively taken part with the mutineers. So it was not surprising that officers who unconcernedly condemned the rebel prisoners to be blown from the guns were dismayed at the prospect of conducting a formal court-martial on the unfortunate artillery pensioner.

It was therefore of the nature of a reprieve

when the summary trial was postponed a day to allow of an expedition against a body of armed peasants who had been raiding on the Trunk Road, the Company's turnpike to Calcutta, up which troops and munitions must come. During the day's respite Delahaney had come to his senses, and had realised the horror of his position once more. He had asked for the Brigadier, who had consented to see him, and his daughter had been brought in from an out-station to find her father in his terrible position. So sympathy and hesitation grew among those left in the fort, the more so that it was believed that the General took the sternest view of the case, and had expressed indignation that the man had ever been taken prisoner.

Late that evening the troops of the flying column staggered into cantonments after twenty miles of marching and a tiring fight, bringing a gun, some prisoners, a rescued European subordinate, and bringing also a dozen of their number in doolies. The tired troops slept where they halted, and Delahaney lay in his cell awaiting the morrow's court, and the General paced up and down his verandah, even his strong nerve affected at the coming trial. And all the while the telegraph ticked news of further risings and mutinies, and cries for urgent help.

That night an hour after sundown cholera broke

out among the relieving column, broke with that suddenness and force that so marked the history of that scourge now happily brought under in India by the march of science. The men that day had broken their ranks in search of water, and, as soldiers always will, had drunk deep of the foulest water, deaf to all remonstrances, and parched beyond all care or patience. Two men were seized at nine o'clock, and by midnight there were fifty cases, the worst dying in an hour or so, till all order and discipline ceased, and men were seized with a panic. And the march of death followed an eccentric course, for every third man in one company went down, and then it took another company by alternate sections, till the doctors could no longer treat the cases, and the men had forced the guard and got at the rum *godown*.¹ By three in the morning the Destroying Angel had passed over the bivouacs of the troops, left untouched the crowded married quarters full of the refugee women and children, and the doctors began to hope. It was perhaps four when the sentry over Delahaney's cell fell down with his arms rattling on the pavement, and as it took him, it took also his prisoner. By dawn Patrick Delahaney was dead and the last debt paid, and ready to be buried with twenty-seven British soldiers who

¹ Store.

died that night. And with Delahaney the hand was stayed. He was the last case, and despite the horror of the sudden outbreak a load was lifted from the whole force and garrison. And with Patrick Delahaney the scourge passed away and disappeared, till men said he had expiated his crime. That very morning, gathering up his fit men, General Neil and his avengers passed on up country, the forerunner of many more, to the soldier's death he was yet to find, and the Brigadier resumed command of his district, and a hundred miles of communications, that he was to keep open as soon as some troops came to him.

So stirring were the times that ere long the defence of the fort and the tragedy of Delahaney were forgotten, as happily in this world all tragedies are. But if you care to stroll down to the old cemetery by the Ganges, where lies half the history of India, you will find the monument to the men of the Lambs who died of that scourge of cholera, and the names of the poor dead thereon. Also by the side you will see a black slate bearing the inscription—

P. D.

1857.

R. I. P.

—and underneath had been engraved the saying of the great king who had tasted all the bitter-

ness that earth could give, and come to peace at the end—

“To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven.”

For there was another in the station who knew the weakness of spirit that may come to the strong man grown old.

THE DURBAR, FROM THE CROWD.

"Here as I sit by the Jumna bank,
Watching the flow of the sacred stream,
Pass me the legions, rank on rank,
And the cannon roar, and the bayonets gleam."
—*Delhi*, 1876.

THE journalist, the news-writer, and the stately historian have had, and will have, much to say of the Imperial Durbar at Delhi, when for the first time since the days of Aurangzeb a real *Bādshāh* has been seen to ride *coram publico*, for all who willed to gaze on. The Maratha leaders of horse, the rebellious Afghan governors, and even the Abulli himself, or the later-day titular holders of the Delhi sceptre, never bulked to the people as the all-powerful ruler that so appeals to the imagination of the East. Power, might, majesty, and dominion appeal to all who need support and protection, and never did any field of the cloth of gold appear more emblematic of empire than did this wonderful assemblage in the late fall of the year of grace 1911.

The writers must search deep into their colour-box for the wherewithal to paint their word

pictures, and to their skill the picture may safely be left. It is enough if the gazer by the wayside can recall some of the *voces populi*, the remarks of those who lined the road or gazed over the ranks of serried bayonets, of the peasant from the fields of Hindustan and the villages of the five rivers, of the trader from the stalls in the packed bazaar, of the American cousin with his camera and lust for souvenirs, of the "Dutchman" who, like the ranks of Tusculum, "could scarce forbear to cheer," since he comes of a people who love empire—and so forth. In the series of pageants we have in the crowd the soldier off duty, the long-suffering constable, European tourists of every nationality, Burmans, Shans, and all the peasantry of the country-side. Let us hear them as they watch a sovereign move through the streets of Delhi, the first time for a couple of centuries. The Indian element is silent; down the Chandni Chouk, and up the roads to the Ridge, their Majesties have ridden in silence. The East, it is true, does not cheer as the West does, at least not readily, but still some sound was expected. But the East forgets little, and in Mogul days he who lifted up his voice as the king passed would have been cut down by the guards. Some evil spirits have reminded the crowd of this, and whispered that the police had orders to beat down the first to

raise a cheer. Not till the procession reaches the Ridge where the British are standing does the real cheer begin. Here are the rulers of state, the high officials and the officers not on duty, the judges of the High Court and the like in wig and crimson gowns. Once upon a time in his early days Mr Kipling described a Governor-General's Levée as seen by the Irish sentry at the door, and a verse of it ran—

“Oh the dignity, and the moild benignity,
Whin the Hoigh Coort judges tuk the floor,
And the shoobedars, wid their midals and shtars,
Stood up to attintion against the door.”

The “moild benignity” and the “shoobedars” were all waiting the King on the Ridge, while all along its line from the Memorial, past Hindoo Rao's house, and the Observatory, and the Flag-staff Tower, battery on battery of artillery stood ready to roar forth a hundred and one salvoes to the glory of the Empire and the memory of the dead that died where the trails lay on the ground.

Two Muhammadan soldiers are discussing what the King will look like. “Has he a beard?” “He had a beard when I saw him and Kitchener Sahib ride round our camps in Rawalpindi. All kings that I ever heard of have beards.” “Ho,” chimes in a native officer, “what do you know about it; he is a king man, a real *Bādshāh*, and

he always rides a *double gorá* [a 'double' or large-size horse], and I saw him every day in *Belaiat* [England]," and so forth, telling of homely curiosity. "Ah," says another, "one only sees a *bādshāh* once in a lifetime. I never saw one, nor did my father, and he was over ninety."

"I have come a hundred miles to see the *Bādshāh*," says an old Sikh peasant. "If I see him I die happy." For the King to the Eastern peasantry is a name to conjure with, and the sight of him a marvel in the life of a man who usually cares for nothing but the sun and the rain and the ripening corn, each in its due season, and has no other distractions. And so they chatter and wait, for all the roads have been thronged for days with the villagers coming to town, each in his best wadded coat covered in flowered calico, with an iron-shod *lathi* on his shoulder. Flip-flop have they jogged in their old sabots along the grand trunk road that the English have made for them. Simple, kindly folk in the main, each unto his light. Hark to one passing a bungalow, flip-flop on the metalled road. A sahib has a two-year-old son in his arms, just down from the Simla hills, rosy and plump as a tomato. The old villager stops and watches father and child, and then says wistfully, "*Bahut hi, piyari chiz hai sahib*" (they are very dear things, sir), and half frightened, hurries on.

The fall had been a feverish one, and his own or his grandchild may have died, but the brave old heart hurries on to town to see the King.

A *bheestie* jogs down the road, giving a final sprinkle to lay the dust before the royal *cortége* comes along. A *bheestie*, a common enough object of the roadside, and the hardest working of all the Indian menials, and the bearer of the most beautiful and most expressive name in all the expressive Orient. Who thinks of the name, as they call for the water-carrier. "Oh, *bheestie*! Oh, man of Paradise! bring water." You may hear it all down the desert fighting-line, and day in day out, along the sweltering railway platform. "Oh, man of Paradise!" You hear the call of Dives to Lazarus in the very name. Yet he jogs down the road to the standpipe unnoticed, though one may remember that a British regiment during the Mutiny unanimously awarded the Victoria Cross allotted to the corps to the regimental *bheestie*. So the *bihisti* or *bheestie* passes on, putting off those who would drink, since to-day he only caters for the *bādshāhi sharak* or royal road. His brother menial comes after him, giving a finishing touch to the roadway, addressed by his fellows in the desire for euphemism as *Maharaj* or prince, lest the more direct address bring ill-fortune. He, too, is bent on his enhanced mission in a new municipal livery.

An Italian hairdresser has run out from his tent on the route to gaze, and is talking politics. "English say got too many Muhammadan subjects, Italy no *avanti* in Tripoli. Poof! You see! English very clever politic. Kink Cheorge make visit Turkey, I tink all come right. Italy very poor country, all big country she take Africa, Italy she try pull out only one fish, you see. That fore I come see King Cheorge, very goot king."

Then at last the guns roar and King "Cheorge" has passed, and the people know that a king has come again in person, and after him, in seven mile of procession, all the feudatory chiefs, the borrowed trappings of Europe, and the ancient arms and emblems of an ancient *régime*. "Oh, my dear, do look at those emeralds!" "Those are all diamonds. Why, they say Jaipur has a hundred thousand pounds of jewels on his coat." "All strung on cotton, I expect; why, once when we were being shown the Kashmir regalia, a string of pearls burst and scattered all over the room, as big as pigeons' eggs, all on a rotten piece of string." "Oh, look at that Burman's silk; isn't it a sweet colour. Ah, look, that is Oodeypoor; I know it is. No, no, it's Jodhpur; well, I know it's one of the Rajputana princes. Oh, do look at those men in chain-armour." "Hullo, why does that Resident sit on the right of his prince? surely he ought to be on the left." And suchlike and so forth, as

crowds in general, and the feminine in particular, are wont to do.

Not far from the Royal camp, just off the main road, are camped the veterans of all races, men who have carried the flag from the Great Wall of China to the snows of the Hindoo Kush, and back to the wastes of the Soudan and the Burmese fens. They have not yet been seen by the King, and are in some excitement, the Indian soldiers looking eagerly for their old officers, and the sympathetic soldier visitors, who will find them out. Along the front railing sit a few old white faces on the benches under the *babul* trees. A few, just a few of the Mutiny men, and here and there a Crimean medal. Sitting under the trees are the same old faces that you may see in the piazza of the long quadrangle at Chelsea, waiting bravely for the *Adeste Fideles* and the closing wail of the fife. Among them is an ex-trumpeter of Money's troop of Horse Artillery, that helped to keep the Ridge hard by the veteran camp. He is chatting to a rather sceptical young provost of the Rifles, who has had a "grouse" to make: "I tell you, young man, that if they treated us in my day one quarter as well as they treat you, it's serving to-day I'd be, if they'd let me." The Company's artillery were mostly Irish, and our trumpeter is no exception. "Was Oi at Dilhi thin? I was so, sorr; faith I was wounded up by the Sammy House there, whin

I was riding behind the Mējor. We lay close to the General's mound over there, to keep them saypoys from coming round behind us." "I left the army, sorr, to thrain a rajah's horses." Many of the European veterans who have settled in India have gone to rajah's stables, and of later days to employment on the railways. The artillery have always been in request in the state stables, and the story of the driver who, after retiring, met his old commanding officer is well known. After conversation the officer asked what amusement he got in his isolated life in a native state. "Oh, lots to do, sir, lots to do. In the evenings me and the other nobles plays lawn tennis."

Among the most notable of the Indian veterans are the men of the Guides, with a considerable number of Mutiny men among them still. To worship at their shrine went some of the modern generation of native officers from the famous old *Coke pultan* — i.e., the 1st Coke's Rifles, Punjab Irregular Force, now known since Lord Kitchenér's numbering as the 55th. To the old men of the Guides the young men repaired, and were received courteously enough. "Oh yes, the *pachwanja* (55th) *pultan*. Very good of you to come, we're sure; won't you sit down?" And then when in the course of conversation some mention of *Coke pultan* was made, "Oh yes, of course we know the *Coke pultan*; I should think we did; why did you

not say so before? what do we know of the new numbers or new anything." And then and there, as an Afridi put it, *Bahut hi buddhe buddhe admi*, who could hardly crawl, had clambered up on to the Ridge and shown them all the glory that had been shared by the Guides and the *Coke pultan*. Among all, however, there was only one real matter of interest—the real *Bādshāh* that was to be seen, that their fathers and their fathers' father had never seen, and that no man would see twice in his life.

Four old men remained of those who had been to the "Bailey Guard," as the Relief of Lucknow is called in India. But when a visitor would photograph them, a dozen more swore roundly that they too had *Bailey Guard gya*, and insisted on being included.

The day of the great Durbar itself was the culminating point in the popular enthusiasm, and after that wonderful pageant tens of thousands flocked to the now vacant throne to worship at it, to throw dust on their heads, and to lay their foreheads on the steps of its plinth in a fervour of exaltation. Under the canopy of the lower throne the feudatory princes of India, in front of massed troops and packed stands, had publicly and fully made homage and obeisance more freely and willingly than ever they had made it of yore,—Rajput and Maratha, Baluch and Sikh

and Pathan, laying their swords at the foot of the *Bādshāh* for all the world to see. Kincob and silk and velvet, diamonds and pearls and emeralds, some in the setting of princes, some clothed like a Carlsbad plum, while, lest men should say that the Anglo-Saxon is devoid of romance, it was the little veiled Begum of Bhopal that drew the cheers from the English benches.

When the *Bādshāh* had ascended the higher throne for all his people to see, and the Herald had proclaimed his address, and the last gun had died away as the departing *cortége* passed, then the people burst the barriers and spread over the country, and streamed back over the roads, and spoke one with another. "Had ever India seen the like before, oh brother." "Who in the villages at home would believe all that there was to tell?" "Once in a lifetime, once in a lifetime, God sends the sun and the rain, and he used to send the spear, and now the land has seen their king." Enthusiasm, real genuine enthusiasm, was moving the crowd as no man had ever seen them moved before. The German Consul-General, when asked his views, summed up the situation, "There are no words"; and all in the crowd, from the Gujar peasant to the proconsul and back again to the British subaltern, had felt the throat catch and the blood course.

At the commencement, when all were in their places waiting for the supreme arrival, there had been also one special and separate ovation. Before the Imperial *cortège* could possibly be due, a cheer had risen and roared round the arena, as a slow yet proud procession wound up the sweep. The veterans were marching to their appointed places to the "Conquering Hero," amid deep enthusiasm. To the glory that was England's was added the pathos of the days "when the strong men shall bow themselves, and the keepers of the house shall tremble, and they that look out of the windows be darkened."

From the slow promenade of the veterans to the pomp and circumstance of the great review is a natural sequence. Of the great war divisions and brigades there is little to be said. The close formations and the forest of bayonets give a fine impression of power. The comments of the many spectators made entirely for admiration, from the American who had "served in the cavalry service in our war," lost in admiration of what he was pleased to call "your coloured troops," to the old Frenchman, full of the *entente cordiale* and his own memories of war: "Oui, monsieur, j'étais brigadier d'hussards dans le division Faidherbe, je suis reste à cheval

en vedette au près de Froeschweiler, pendant douze heures, monsieur, pendant douze heures. J'ai vu passer l'armée rompue du Maréchal Mañon, canons, fourgons, blessés tous mêlés," . . . and so forth—the burden being that he knew war, and he knew troops when he saw them. Among the benches where the British officers not on parade with the troops were congregated, the remarks were ribald and colloquial. "My chapeau! look at all those Chinese." This to a brigade with three battalions of Gurkhas in it. "Why, they've cut their pigtails off." This for the benefit of a Gurkha friend near by. In England you may hear the rifle battalions spoken of in all friendliness as the "Black plague," and indeed in this parade the rifle green of the Gurkhas and Rifle battalions largely predominated. Then as the composite British brigade came along, with four battalions in it that were Royal regiments, and half the history of the British Line behind them, swinging past with 3000 bayonets moving like one, "Why, look at those two battalions of barbarians" (the 42nd and the 93rd be it noted); "thank goodness they are not allowed to play their pipes." (They were being played past by the massed brass bands.) The army is nothing if not ribald and critical. May the British sub-

altern ever feel equal to treating the world as a jest! But when the great masses wheeled round, and the thunder of the galloping artillery died away and the great columns advanced in line, one forest of bayonets, straight towards the spectator, even the ribald ones were silent, and the presentment of might was borne in on all. The Frenchman even ceased from his reminiscences, and cheered in frenzy with his neighbours. Then the seamen and the "fish" gunner guard from the *Medina* came to the present, and their Majesties rolled away, and troops and crowds broke off, every corps to its tents, its own quickstep playing. "My Love is like a Red, Red Rose" and "Scotland for Ever" striving to beat down "The Double Eagle" and "Garryowen," till the pipes took up the tale, and the sheepskins banged on all quarters of the horseshoe jheel.

And Dumbri, of course, was there in the crowd. Who is Dumbri? Why! half Upper India know the mad beggar who mounts guard outside your house from time to time, with a great wooden harquebuss covered with regimental badges and bad coins, and a beggar's gourd slung like a cartouch-box over his shoulders. Dumbri may be a madman, or he may only be a clever beggar, or he may be an agent of some of the under-

ground workings that rumble under the Indian volcano. Only the Thuggi and Dacoity know that; but anyway, if you are a wise man you will keep in his good books. Not long ago a colonel of a regiment had refused to pay blackmail, and sent the indignant Dumbri away; but the next day, at the polo tournament, as the said colonel tried to make his way through the crowd, lo! there was Dumbri presenting arms with his harquebuss, and shouting "Make way! make way! for the mighty colonel of the —th, who wouldn't give me a rupee though I had mounted guard at his door for two whole days. Make way! make way!"

However, there was Dumbri presenting arms to his Majesty, and vowing he would never present arms again to ordinary sahibs, not for all the rupees in India. Which was very much what the British soldier had said, in the spirit so close on republicanism that it abhors lesser stars. It was on the King's guard at Delhi, and a proconsul and escort drove by. "Ho! we don't take no notice of these 'ere governors now."

So after the King, and past old mad Dumbri, the crowd surged home, talking always in the same strain of the *Bādshāh* and the great *Tomasha*,¹ that never the world had known

¹ Spectacle.

before. One other topic, too, was a common one, and showing, perhaps, how the great machinery of government pinches as it grinds. Never, said the old country folk, had the police been so *mihurban*, so kind. It was no longer "*Hut jao*," and "Get away out of this," and "Serve you right if you do get run over!" but "Would you be so good as to move along," and "Granfer, mind the motor," and the like. "No doubt," as one old farmer said, "the *Bādshāh* had given orders to the police to treat his subjects properly; it was only real *Bādshāhs* who thought of poor folk in the streets." *Il faut s'adresser au bon Dieu et pas aux saints*, as other philosophers in other lands have said. And a ragged leper by the roadside waving the flies from its (you could hardly say his) face, with fingerless stumps, cried in a voice forged on anvils hot with pain, that the Queen herself had heard and ordered relief. Wherever one went, wherever one listened, was the same chorus of contentment that the *Bādshāh* had come and been seen by his people, and stirred the pride of other days.

At the *Bādshāhi Mela*, the royal fair, in the *bezla* of the Jumna, the whole people from far and near marched by sept and clan and religion past their Majesties, who sat for them, in their crowns and robes, on the *Masamman* Tower on

the walls of the Mogul Palace, so that all the folk from the country might "see the king in his golden crown," which they did to their hearts' great content, and cheered as never the East had dared do before. Then in the palace above roamed what the reception *babu* in a native state would call "the illustrated guests," the royal suite and all the officers of the services there assembled, with many a foreign visitor, over the grounds that had seen half the glory and the tragedy of the old empire, under the Hall of Audience, round the peacock throne with its world-famed boasted motto, and the marble fretwork of the *Diwan-i-am*, whose maker never dreamed of the fairy voice that should describe it as "too cunning for words." By the gateway whence poor Douglas of the King's Guard had ordered away the first of the mutineers from Meerut who clamoured to see the Mogul, a Fusilier guard waited to present arms to such of "them rājāhs" and others as might be so entitled, and cinematographers reeled their spools in readiness. What if, by the working of some old law of nature, these same spools had reproduced a procession of Shah Jehan in all his glory, printed from some negative of time; or, perhaps, the procession of Hodson bringing in the old king from the Tomb of Humayun! And

then over it all the biggest portent of any in Delhi that day, . . . the six great wireless masts within the palace, that some men call the last word of the English. . . . The wireless system that now rings India, on its way to reach round the world, following the British drums, which follow the sunset round the world each even.

In the streets all the school children had been provided with a medal bearing the heads of their Majesties, and showed them off eagerly, and even away in the village schools a similar distribution had been made. In all the streets the veterans paraded their intense satisfaction—for had not his Majesty actually spent over an hour going down their ranks, speaking to almost every one, and making kindly remarks in their own language? It is good to cherish the men who have carried the eagles, and the *Bādshāh* had not forgotten. "When," said one triumphant old man, who had been serving as a mace-bearer, "did a king in the Mogul days ever allow such as me to come within a hundred feet of him, but this *Bādshāh* has shaken hands with me, and called me faithful, and the Queen has given me a medal; was ever such a Raj before?"

Then quietly in the corners the other party, or rather parties, sad enough, too, some of them. Here, perhaps, the fanatical genuine child of

Islam, grieving over the glory of past dynasties, horror-struck that the cross should flourish where the crescent had failed. Learned, benevolent, respectable, but bitter at heart always. Sir Alfred Lyall saw and felt it clearly at the earlier celebration when the Queen of England became Empress of India.

“Near me a Musalmán, civil and mild,
Watched as the shuttlecocks rose and fell,
And he said, as he counted his beads and smiled,
‘God smite their souls to the depths of hell!’”

Or utterly distinct in feelings and aspiration, the true fanatical Brahmin, who has really and truly brought himself to believe that the English are the ruin of everything good and great in Hindostan. Such are the men that the *gurukuls* are aiming at turning out—men after the discipline of Ignatius Loyola, with their wills sunk in one great wrong-spirited cause. Such are the fanatics whom none can lead, and from whom there is no protection for the English official. Happily such spirit as yet permeates but the few. Its worst feature is that it is absolutely genuine. To them the great *Raj* and its high aims and the enthusiasm inspired in the crowd are anathema.

Yet another party looks on with mixed feel-

ings—viz., the leaders of that clever, well-educated party who demand self-government for India and India for the Indians, and even dream of so frightening the English that fear shall grant what reason withholds. Clever, often well-meaning people enough, versed in the talk of the political meeting-hall, and possibly really believing that they and their fellows could control the forces they would conjure up. Possibly, too, they really forget that their hand has never kept their head for a thousand years, and that the northern hordes eagerly look for the day when once again the plains of Hindostan shall lie bare to the raider. But the English know it well, and wait patiently till in the fulness of time they shall have educated a better and sterner people to the difficult task of self-government. At any rate they, the Bengali and the Maratha Brahmin, may have realised that to tip over the British Raj is a big proposition and not to be lightly entered on. They have, too, perhaps realised how real is the security that the great police provides for them as they kept the roads at Delhi for high and low, and behind whom the British bayonets keep the ring.

Here in their chagrin we may leave them, and the crowd that stood to watch the English King come to imperial Delhi and its rose-red palace,

to mark one more stage in the appointed task of nursing the East to prosperity and self-reliance.

“O men of the wandering sea-borne race,
Your venture was high, but your wars are done,
Ye have rent my veil, ye behold my face ;
What is the land that your arms have won ?”

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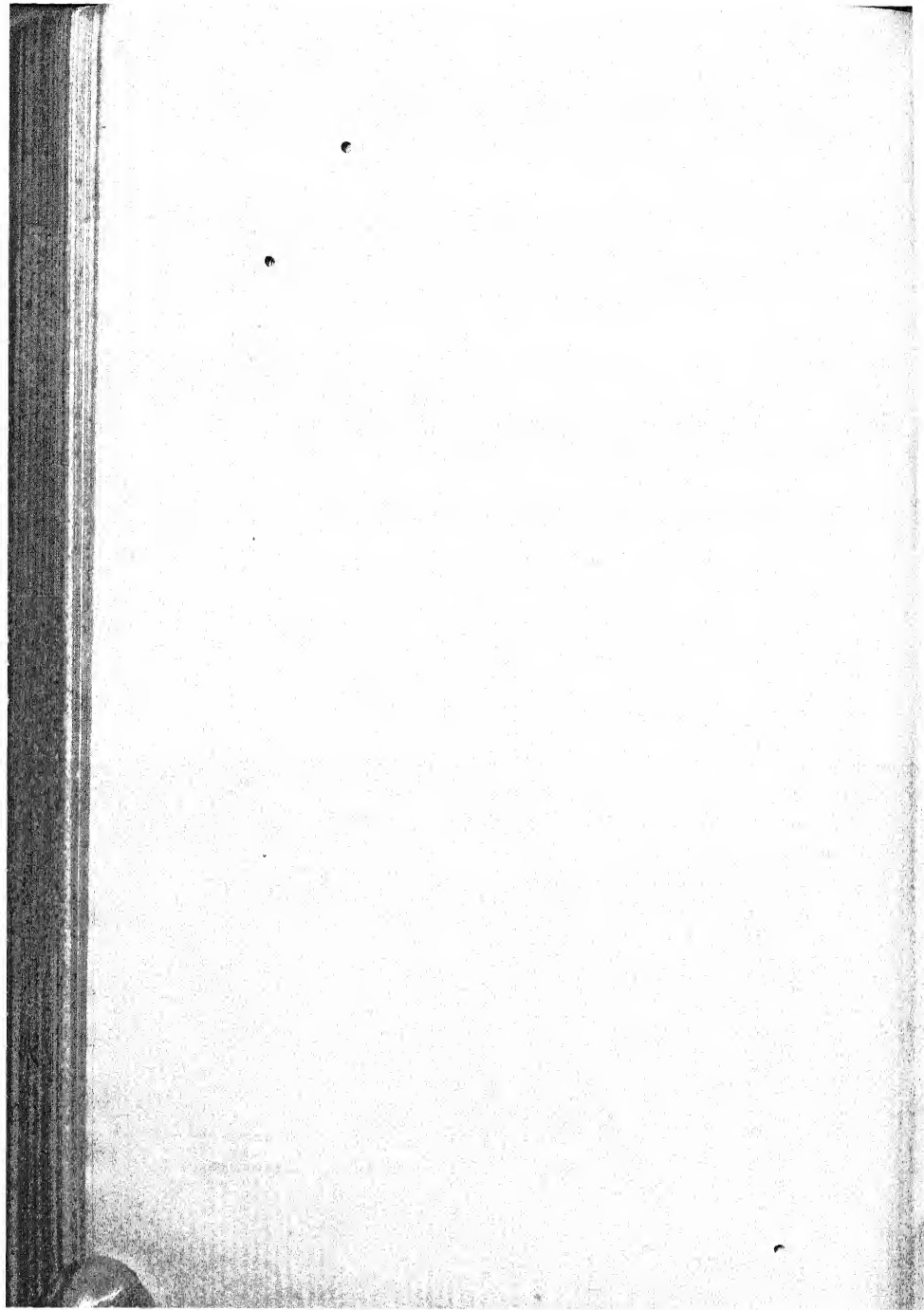
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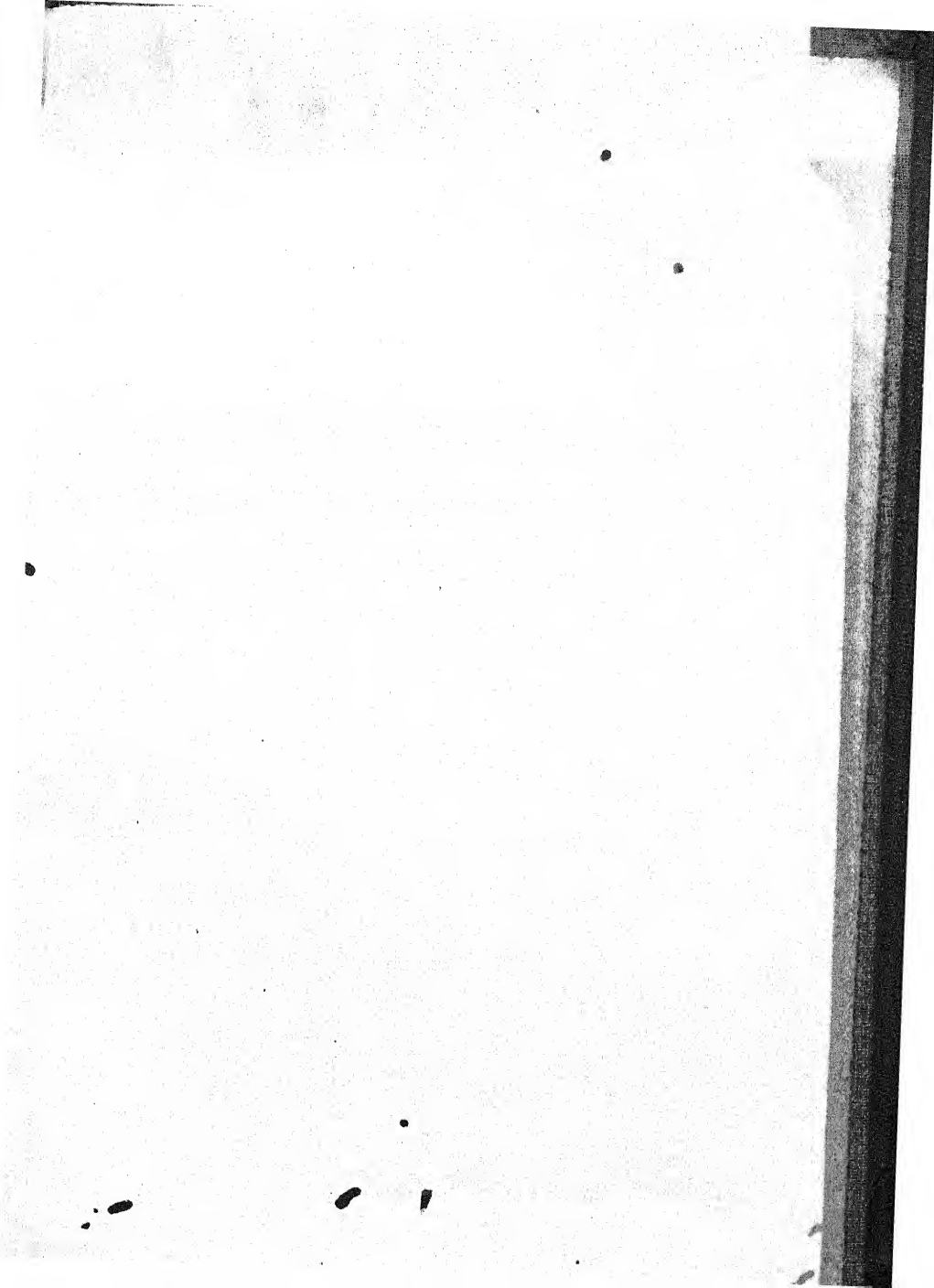
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